

THE SIKH PERSPECTIVE OF HUMAN VALUES



edited by
Dr. GURNAM KAUR



PUBLICATION BUREAU
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

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Department of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies
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FOREWORD

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies Department of this University has the tradition of holding special lectures by some reputed scholars every year. "Guru Nanak Commemorative Lectures" and "Guru Tegh Bahadur Commemorative Lectures" are the two series conducted by the department. The present book "The Sikh Perspective of Human Values" includes five such special lectures which have brought to light the important facets related with the different aspects of Guru Nanak Dev's and Guru Tegh Bahadur's lives and teachings.

In the philosophical traditions of the world, religious philosophy occupies a special place because religion has played a great role in the creation, establishment and maintenance of human values. A religion devoid of human values can not be imagined even. The religion propounded by the Sikh Gurus is based on the universal elements and can be termed as the universal religion in its nature and influence. Baba Farid says :

'Speak never a rude word to any the Lord Eternal in all abides;

Break no heart — know, each being is a priceless jewel. (129)

Each heart is a jewel, evil it is to break any;

Shouldst thou seek to find the Beloved, break no one's heart.

(130) (Sri Guru Granth Sahib., 1384)

ਇਕੁ ਫਿਕਾ ਨਾ ਗਾਲਾਇ ਸਭਨਾ ਮੈ ਸਚਾ ਧਣੀ॥

ਹਿਆਉ ਨ ਕੈਹੀ ਠਾਹਿ ਮਾਣਕ ਸਭ ਅਮੋਲਵੇ॥ ੧੨੯॥

ਸਭਨਾ ਮਨ ਮਾਣਿਕ ਠਾਹਨੁ ਮੂਲਿ ਮਚਾਗਵਾ॥

ਜੇ ਤਉ ਪਿਰੀਆ ਦੀ ਸਿਕ ਹਿਆਉ ਨ ਠਾਹੇ ਕਹੀਦਾ॥੧੩੦॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੮੪)

Today world is going through a special kind of ethical crisis. Man is going astray as he has no ideal before him to pursue. It has become a need of the time to present a real picture of religion. The department of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies of the University is working in this direction. "The Sikh Perspective of Human values" is an effort in the same line.

I hope the readers will welcome the effort and benefit from the same

JOGINDER SINGH PUAR

Vice-Chancellor

*Punjabi University
Patiala*

INTRODUCTION

Religion is not merely a philosophical insight which defines the nature of Reality, the nature of man and his relation to the Reality, neither it is an ethical system only which seeks to lay down the true values related with human activity. Religion is the basic commitment of man to God. The main concern of religion is to show him the way to reach this Reality. It concerns with the soul of man. Religion seeks to enlighten man about the real meaning of his existence, so that he can realize the Truth and put it into action to his being in particular and resolve the problem of suffering of the whole human race in general. So religion is not merely the response of the rational faculties of man to what he finds of ultimate value in life. It is the response of the whole person, an acceptance and commitment to whatever he takes to be of ultimate value in existence.

We are completely involved, the implications of this fact are that there must be something outside ourselves which makes its claim upon us. Because we often think of ourselves as seeking the meaning of life, this may not be very much clear to us. The seeking for life's meaning has its own peculiar nature. Religion is the way to bring the life to a focus. At the same time this seeking is quite different from the research in other areas of science because it is normative in nature rather than descriptive. When we observe the harmony in nature, the whole cosmos working according to set rules, the delicate balance of so many opposite factors, which make the life of the whole universe then we conclude that there is Supreme, Intelligent, All Knowing Being called God, Who is the Creator of all this universe. According to the Gurus, in Sikhism, such knowledge is realized by comprehending the rational nature of the universe. And realized knowledge is the highest knowledge which is related with the divine order, the *hukum*.

This movement from God to man through which the whole of

man is involved is called revelation. Revelation is basically the communication of, the disclosure of, the Highest Truth, the manifestation of the Divine Will to man. It is the process through which God makes Himself known to us, discloses Himself to us. It is the evidence of the Highest Reality, God. While manifesting the Divine Will to us, disclosing Himself to us, He demands that, we, in turn must do something in response. Thus, here, the problem is not to project our own ideas, our thought to Him. It is simply to recognise and understand His communication, His approach to us. Generally, the revelation is conceived as the communication of Divine Truth in some unusual ways, by the means which are not open to the ordinary channels. Revelation in some form or the other is basic to all religions. Buddhism does not believe in God but still it is a revealed religion because Mahatma Buddha got enlightenment. There is some sort of enlightenment in every religion. Every revelation is independent and is not identical everywhere. It differs in forms, images, commandments, rites and sanctities. Every revelation is considered immutable in its time and the uniqueness and independence of a revelation consists in the personality it creates, the transformation it brings about in the society.

There are so many ways in which revelation can take place. According to the Western conception there are mainly three ways through which revelation takes place in nature, in mystical experience and through historical events. According to the Indian conception, especially the *Vedic* schools of thought believe that first, the world at large is a revelation of God, the Supreme Reality. Secondly in the form of *Shruti* i.e. the *Veda* is promulgated at the beginning of each world cycle of *Ishvara*. Thirdly *Brahman* reveals Himself through *Avtars* and the fourth is *Anubhuti* i.e. from meditation on the *Upanishdic* texts one gets the direct experience of *Brahman*.

1.2 The conception of revelation according to Sikhism is different from the above mentioned, and is unique one. According to the Gurus man can have the direct communion with God through the meditation on His Nām. The Gurus meditated on God's Nām, had direct communion with the ultimate Truth and

then expressed this realized Truth in their own language in the form of hymns known as *Bāṇī*. So the Truth contained in the hymns is described to be God given. The revelation of truth, the insight to the Guru is referred to by the Guru himself. The Guru had the direct experience of Truth, had direct communication and then expressed this Truth, the communication in his own language. We find many evidences regarding to this effect in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the *Janam Sākhī*s and the writings of Bhai Gurdas, the first theologian of Sikhism.

Now if we go deep into the study of the unique process of revelation in Sikhism we can easily see that it takes place in three dimensional ways. First, the ultimate Reality, the Absolute Truth (*Shabad*) is revealed to the Guru in the mystic experience, in a direct communion with God. Then this ultimate Truth (*the Shabad*) is communicated by the Guru to the Sikh in the form of *Bāṇī*. This is in a way general revelation. Then the *Gurmukh* or *Braham-giāni* is enabled to comprehend the ultimate Truth. He is enabled to have a communion with God. Though Guru helps him, he rises to this experience with the grace and blessings of the Guru but here the medium, the mediator does not remain a mediator in person. The *Braham-giāni* or *Gurmukh* experiences the *Shabad* himself. The Sikh revelation is in the ascending order in spiritual sense. It is not in the descending order on the other because, one has to rise to experience the ultimate Truth directly. The Sikh thought provides a qualifying model in this form. One has to qualify, has to ascend to that height. So it includes efforts at the individual level plus, the grace of the Guru. The *Brahma-giāni* or *Gurmukh* when once has achieved this state will remain in that state because after transcending all the limitations only, he achieves this unique state and once achieved it is never lost. No forces of evil propensities i.e. *Kam*, *Karodh*, *Lobh*, *Moh* and *Ahankār* can penetrate into it. But we find many references in the old *Vedic* literature and *Puranas* in Hinduism concerning the Rishis, who had achieved mystic states through asceticism and meditation, but whenever they find any temptation they fall from this state. Contrary to this, the unique experience according to Sikhism is possible while leading the life of a householder. There

is no need to give up the worldly life and to be an ascetic or mendicant. That is why Sikhism is a societal religion and realistic one. The source of Revelation in Sikhism is the Divine or God Himself.

This process of revelation is a continual one from Guru Nanak the first Guru, and to Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and the last Guru. The divine manifestation in Sikhism is expressed through the concept of *joti* and *jugati*. The same *joti* is manifested in all the ten Gurus, that is why they treat themselves as Nanak. "*Joti ohā jugati sāei seh Kāyā pher platīyai.*" The Guru in physical form is fallible because human body is a combination of five elements which are destructible and not eternal ones. So according to Sikhism the Word (*Shabad*) is the true Guru. In this sense the *Bānī* is the Guru which is revealed by God through Guru. The formal status of Guru was bestowed by Guru Gobind Singh on the *Granth*. The Sikh revelation is independent and unique one. It is not in continuity with *Vedic* or *Upanishdic* revelation, nor it is an amalgamation of Hinduism and Islam. The revealed thought is always independent. As Sikh revelation is unique one, similarly the Sikh scripture, which contains this revelation is unique as compared to other Books of revelation or scriptures. As mentioned earlier Guru Nanak, avers that God Himself is the source of *Bānī*, the Primal Word, and *Bānī* is the way of His manifestation. The second Guru, Angad Dev made clear distinction between the revelation of the *Vedas* and the revelation in Sikhism i.e. *Bānī*. Upto the time of third Guru in parallelism to the Gurus, other people started the composition of verses to declare themselves equally good Guru. To make people conscious of this factor, Guru Amardas made the clear distinction between true revelation and the false one. According to the Guru the *Bānī* revealed by the *Satguru* is the true one. The fourth Guru Ramdas bestowed the Status of the Guru on the *Bānī*, the revelation. The fifth Guru Arjan Dev compiled the *Bānī* in the form of *Granth* and installed it at the higher place than himself known as *Kotha Sahib* in Sikh Tradition. Guru Gobind Singh formally bestowed the status of the *Guru* on *Granth* and ordained the Sikhs to accept the *Granth*

as *Guru* after him and seek guidance from the scripture. The *Bible*, the *Quran* which contains the revelation of Christianity and Islam, were compiled and edited by the followers of the respective religions after the time of the prophets and with consultation among themselves. Nobody knows who is the writer of or who composed or compiled the *Vedas*. But *Guru Granth Sahib* is the only scripture in the world religions which was composed by the Gurus themselves and the fifth Nanak compiled himself during his life time and while including the *Bāṇī* of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the tenth and the last Guru bestowed the status of the *Guru* on it.

Some people try to trace the impact of other Indian religious traditions on Guru Nanak Dev because of the terminology used by the Guru. The fact is that the Guru, to convey his message in the best possible manner used the common popular spoken language of the people of that period. He used the dialogical method to make the received Truth more clear and with whomsoever he made a dialogue he used their terminology and idiom. For example when he had a dialogue with the *Yogis* he used their terminology, with the *Kazis*, he used the Persian and with the *Pundits*, he made maximum use of their vocabulary. The reason being that he wanted to make them understand and apprehend the Reality in the right perspective.

These days many people, just to establish their scholarship, are trying to invent many different stories about the change in the form of the *Bāṇī* and its editing by Guru Arjan Dev. While doing this they ignore two important factors. One, that deviation and opposition of the Guru was started by those who could not tolerate the transformation in the whole existing ideology by the first Guru. The first Guru challenged the whole social and religious establishment through his *Bāṇī*. These opponents penetrated into the Guru's fold and opposed him. The first example we can site is, of Baba Sri Chand, the eldest son of Guru Nanak Dev *ji*. Then there is the *Meena Prampara* and the *Dhirmaliyas*. These people belonged to the Guru's own house and family but they opposed the Guru by all possible means because they were aspirant for the *Gurugaddi* (Guruship). So how can we depend upon the sources made available by those people who

themselves opposed the Guru? How can we say that what is recorded with them is correct and perfect record when Guru Amardas himself has noted this factor that there is *Kachi* (false one) and *Pakki* (true one) *Bāṇī* in existence? Another thing which they do not take the notice of or knowingly ignore is, that every Guru recorded his *Bāṇī* in the written form and every Guru handed his own *Bāṇī* and the *Bāṇī* of his predecessors or Gurus to the next Guru when he bestowed Guruship on him. So the *Bāṇī* of the previous Gurus reached Guru Arjan Dev intact. It is told in the *Giān Ratnavali* that Guru Arjan Dev compiled the *Bāṇī* in the form of *Granth* in *Gurmukhi* script, because the followers of *Sodhis* (*Prithiās* and *Dhirmaliās*) have started composing *Bāṇī*. The Guru stopped the further composition, so that none should recite or read any other *Bāṇī* than that of the *Granth*. There were no reasons and chances during the first five Guru's time not to keep *Bāṇī* safe and pure. Bhai Gurdas, while talking about the travels of Guru Nanak Dev, has recorded in his *Vārs* that Guru Nanak kept the book (*Pothi*) with him when he went to visit Mecca. The theoretical expression of any religious experience is the doctrine. The doctrines were established by the very first Guru through the revelation, the *Bāṇī*. Again, according to Bhai Gurdas, Guru Nanak Dev ji established the authority of his doctrine i.e. of Name Divine and started the religion of altruism which was devoid of any impurities. Guru Nanak Dev composed the ship of *Bāṇī* to ferry across the Sikhs of the dark and deep sea of the world. It is also something unique that he installed Bhai Lehna as his successor and confirmed his position as Guru. He passed on his light to Guru Angad in such a manner, as if his spirit had moved from one body to another. Guru Nanak Dev had spiritually transformed Guru Angad into the likeness of himself. Guru Angad got qualified for the Guruship. It has been very clearly narrated by Bhai Gurdas that the thing goes to that container or vessel to which it belongs or in which it can be contained safely. The thing (Guruship) goes to the rightful person who qualifies to have it. So Guru Nanak established the qualifying model. It is said that Guru Nanak's father Mehta Kalu asked the Guru that he does not love his sons as much as he loves

Lahena (Guru Angad). The Guru said that there are two types of sons one who are your born sons, who share your blood and others who are the spiritual sons, with whom you are related through the word. Only those are dear ones who follow you. So only Lahena qualifies to be his successor.

1.3 The doctrinal establishment was done by Guru Nanak in the revelation in *Mūlmantra* which is given at the beginning of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and these doctrines are further elaborated in the whole revelation. Some people especially the American based writers have opined that *Mūlmantra* in its present form was shaped by Guru Arjan Dev when he compiled the *Guru Granth Sahib*. It is wrong on their part to suppose so and misguide the Western scholars who are not well versant in the language of the original sources. For example they say that the numeral '1' (one) was affixed by Guru Arjan Dev not by Guru Nanak. But if we go deep into the *Bāṇī* of Sri Guru Nanak Dev then we can see that the doctrine of 'IK' or One God was given by Guru Nanak himself. For example in *Dakhni Oankāri*, *Rāg Rāmkalī* at page 929 Guru Nanak says that from the Supreme Being, Sole and Unique get Brahmā his existence, who in mind bore the Supreme Being, Sole and Unique *Oanam*, worthy of obedience, is the essence of the three worlds. In *Mūlmantra* Guru Nanak Dev holds that God is the One, Universal Being, the Real, the Spirit. He is the Creator, the Controller and Enjoyer, Beyond restraint, the Spontaneous, beyond any internal antagonisms, the Harmonious, He is timeless, the embodied. Yet He does not come into birth and death, He is Self-Existent. We can attune to Him through Guru's grace.

Bhai Gurdas while elaborating the significance of *Mūlmantra* says that through the numeral one (1), the Guru meant the Oneness and Uniqueness of God. Bhai Gurdas while explaining the above mentioned characteristics of God as given by the Guru in *Mūlmantra* says His ordinance is limitless and immortal and the whole of creation owes its light to Him. The Five letters (*Akhar*) of *Ik Oankar* (ੴ-ਨੰਕਾਰ) imply that those to whom He is compassionate remember His Name. Those blessed by the Grace of God get liberation. He further says that the nine

numerals stand apart from the cipher (zero). When the zero is affixed with them, their value increases ten-times; thus with the addition of zeros i.e. *Jap* recitations, one proceeds to the numberless God.

This is the gist of the Sikh revelation and all the values related with Sikhism originate from this revelation. God is the source of all values because the whole of Sikh revelation is the description of One Sole, Supreme Being. The ideal placed before man is to realize Him and to be like Him, Who is the Source of all creation, Whose Light pervades all. According to Sikhism, the type of God we worship will give us the type of life we live. That is why man is asked to remember and concentrate on God's Name day and night so that he can realize the above mentioned characteristics of God in him. He is to realize the source of his creation and merge in Him.

1.4 So in order to have a look into the human values, to talk about the human rights according to Sikhism one has to look into its revelation. As mentioned earlier, revelation is the manifestation of the Highest Truth, the disclosure of the Ultimate Reality, God makes Himself known in Revelation and in response to this manifestation He demands a commitment, the commitment of total submission, of total dedication, the involvement of the whole human personality. This has been very clearly indicated in the *Bāni* by Guru Nanak Dev ji, "If you seek to engage in the game of love then step into my street with thy head placed on thy palm, while on to this stepping sacrifice your head ungrudgingly." Meaning hereby that in the Love of God one has to submit fully to the Will of God. Head is the symbol of ego, the sense of I-ness, so, while, treading the path of God's love one has to eliminate the sense of "I-ness" from himself, which is the narrow view point and merge himself into God, which is the indication of larger, wider view point, the higher consciousness. It is the commitment of the whole person. While rising above the narrow view of I-am-ness only man can love, love is the means to achieve His Grace. Guru Gobind Singh also avers in *Akal Ustat* "what if you close your eyes and sit in meditation like a crane. You bathe at the seven seas but you lose this way the merit both of here and hereafter.

You live in sin and pass your life in vain. All you listen to me because what I am saying is Truth, that he attains God alone who love." Only in His Love man can achieve the characteristics of being above fear and rancour which are the characteristics of God. The fear of death is worse of all fears. And according to Sikhism, the call of God to man demands in response to rise above the fear of death. As told by Guru Arjan Dev that "first accept death as inevitable and discard attachment to life. Turn dust of feet of all (means be humble) - thereafter come to us." Death has been praised if it gets one approved in the eyes of God. As Guru Nanak Dev addresses the people of the world saying, "Do not revile death, only one should know how to die. Serve the Lord Almighty so that your path is made easy and you tread on it. While treading this path you will receive reward and exaltation hereafter. While carrying this reward you will be absorbed in Truth and your devotion will be approved. Then you will find a place in Divine Mansion, win the pleasure of God and in joy disport. Not only this, those persons who die this way they are considered heroic by the people and their dying is considered holy and divinely approved. Obtaining honour at the Divine portal they depart with honour and in the hereafter do not undergo any suffering. They shall obtain such reward if they meditate on God and the service to God drives away all fears. They bear their suffering in mind and do not utter it aloud. God Himself knows all this."

The points which follow from the above mentioned quotes are : the first point is that love of God is the basic principle to achieve Him. From His Love follows the love for His creation. Love is the only way to reach Him, as said in *Swaiyās* by the Tenth master Guru Gobind Singh. It is because of this way of love that a Sikh supplicates for good to all in his daily prayer.

The second point which comes out is that the way of love is the way of total submission to God. Here the follower, who is to walk on this path is asked to come with his head on his palm. This is total commitment in which is included one's mind, will, word and action. Head is the symbol of ego which one has to eradicate from oneself. There does not remain an iota of duality

or doubt. This is the way of Guru oriented person where the individual will merge in the will of the Guru. This is to live in tune with the Guru. Man lives his life as ordained by the Guru and Guru is *Shabad Guru* in Sikhism. Man transcends all the limitations of the individual self and the individual self merges into the Universal self. This is to live in *Hukam*.

The third point which follows is that man is free to chose this path. The choice is placed before him. He is not compelled to walk on this path. He is made aware of the difficulties and hardships of the path beforehand. The possibilities are also placed before him. Option lies with man. To chose this path is under his individual will. He is to chose this difficult path and walk on it if he is inspired to and have the courage, enthusiasm, and zeal to walk on it. The path of love is a difficult path that is why all this is required of him .

The fourth point which follows logically from this to my mind is, that it includes reason and contemplation. The path which is related with choice and total submission can not be selected and followed blindly. It discourages blind following. That is why it is said in the *Bāṇī* "*aklīn sāhib seviai aklīn pāyiaī mānu*" Man is required to serve God with wisdom. *Akāl* is the culmination of higher reasoning which includes higher type of understanding also. The path which is not easy to be treaded, which demands your head on your palm, total commitment and total submission, compels you to reason it out hundred times. It needs evaluation and evaluation is always based on higher reasoning.

The next very important point to be noted is, that once one has selected this path of the highest Truth, once one has placed ones feet on this, there is no retreating, one is not supposed to turn ones back to the Guru, to God. The seeker is expected to walk with his face towards the Guru. To wave from the path means to turn the back to the Guru. While treading on the path, one may have to give up ones life even to protect the ideals laid down on this path. "*Sir Dijai kani na kijai*" one may have to pick up the arms but to pick up the arms is the last resort when all

other means fail :

*Chun kar az haman heellate dar guzasht
halalasad gurdan ba shamshir dasat.*

So to walk on this path means to live in dignity, to lead an honourable life with self respect. One is not only to protect his own self-respect, dignity and honour but to protect the honour and dignity of others also. One has to fight for justice to all. One has to restore the freedom of all. The principle of universal love teaches love to God and His creation, the nature; and to love man the whole of humanity, which is His best creation.

1.5 The Sikh ideals are directly manifested in the Sikh revelation and the Sikh way of life is the practical manifestation of those ideals. Here comes the concept of martyrdom or *shahādat* in Sikhism which is very new concept to the Indian spiritual traditions and culture. The concept of martyrdom is not available in any other Indian spiritual thought. The word *shahādat* is from Persian language which has its root in the word *Shāhad*. *Shahādat* means to appear as a witness to Truth and *Shāhad* means the person who gives such a witness to truth and its Punjabi form is *shahid*. So according to Sikh ideals one is expected to stand by Truth, be committed to Truth. In other Indian traditions prior to Sikhism, we find the concept and tradition of *Bali* or sacrifice, not of *Shahādat*. The article of *Bali* can be anything from a human being, to an animal to a material thing. It is not voluntary because it does not include the will of the being to be sacrificed. The article of *Bali* or sacrifice is offered by the outside agency without asking its will to be sacrificed to appease the god or gods or goddesses. It is forced one. As far as the concept of *Shahādat* is concerned it is the chosen path, not forced at all. One is free to chose it because it is to be chosen with a commitment and with deep and higher contemplation. It is the way of love. At the same time it is an achievement which is related with qualification. One has to qualify to achieve this. *Shahādat* is a stage which you achieve while living. One has to rise above the sense of narrow attitude of I-am-ness, has to transcend the evil propensities known as *kām* (concupiscence or lust), *lobh* (covetousness or greed), *moh*

(attachment and delusion), *Krodh* (ire, wrath) *ahankār* (and pride). The seeker of this accomplishment is to put efforts. It also includes grace. It is due to grace of God that man is able to proceed on this path.

Another important point related with the concept of *Shahādat* is that it is the witnessing of Truth. Truth here implies the universal Truth. So the area of its implication is very very wide one which includes the whole of humanity. So the aim before *Shahādat* is not to protect one's own honour, dignity and freedom but to fight for the universal justice, to protect the human freedom as a whole. For example the right to religious faith and worship is a human right which everybody should enjoy but not on the cost of others. The Sikh Gurus do not believe in *Vedas*, which are the Hindu scriptures, they do not believe in *Janeu* and *Tilak* which are the sacred symbols of the Hindus. But Guru Tegh Bahadur gave up his life for the protection of the *Janeu* and *Tilak*. Why? Because according to the Sikh ideology to believe in a particular religion and to worship according to that faith is the right of that particular person. It is the granted basic freedom of man. So he should be allowed to act accordingly. No body has got the right to interfere into other's faith may be he a king like Aurangzeb. It is not the question whether one believes in it or not. It is the question of human freedom to have faith and to worship in a particular religion.

The spiritual philosophy of Sikhism is rooted in the idea of freedom which is also related with its concept of social equality and justice. When the same Light resides in all, when the source of the whole creation is that Sole Supreme Being, then, how any body can be high or low. So, in Sikhism the idea of caste-system is outrightly rejected. The concept of justice is basic to Sikhism and seeks to ensure justice to all. But how justice can be envisaged without social equality? So rejection of caste system is necessary to ensure the social justice. According to *Vedic* and *Upanishdic* thought only the upper sections of the social strata have the right to spiritual education and experience. But according to Sikhism everybody has the right to spiritual education, experience and emancipation. Emancipation is the

necessary feature of human and social life and this leads to the sense of equality of all human beings. Guru Tegh Bahadur says, "He who bestowed life, property, joy and noble abodes, why not to remember Him? God alone is the giver of all joy, none else. Only by contemplation on His Name man can attain the supreme state of liberation. That is why what is wrong in the social and human life has been rejected on the basis of its being unethical also." The Guru further says that "the holy devotees proclaim that God abides in each being. So to cross the ocean of existence be devoted to Him." And according to Sikhism who is the liberated one? One who is indifferent to praise and dispraise, one to whom gold and iron are alike is truly a liberated person. Another very important feature which determines the spiritual, social and political attitude of Sikhism towards fellow beings is that an emancipated person neither terrorise anybody nor stands in fear of any one. This is a very crucial point which is key to Sikh theology of liberation. The Sikh Gurus very much practised this philosophy. This is the balancing attitude towards life, which was not available in the earlier traditions. Man is asked to realize his exalted origin as he is in the image of Divine Light. Being in the image of Divine Light, God ever resides by man. Those who listen to and follow Guru's teachings, they ever live in bliss. He who realizes his origin realize God. By Guru's grace who realizes the Sole Creator, duality disappears from his mind and he is accepted at God's court and enjoys bliss.

Having their origination from the same source all are one. Sikhism teaches the unity of God-head as well as the unity of man. None is high or low. Socially and spiritually all are equal and there is no reservation of religious, social, political or economic rights for any particular individual or class, caste or group as was prevalent in India from the centuries. Spiritual experience and knowledge of words (i.e. education) both are very important for the balanced development of the human personality. According to the *Bāṇī* those are dark wells of ignorance who do not understand what tradition of religion teaches. They are blind of mind and their minds are like upturned lotuses, hideous is their aspect. Those who have no understanding of mystic sound and of

scriptures, are devoid of joys of music and can not discriminate good from bad. Such persons who have no intelligence and can not understand a syllable, are authentic asses and are proud of themselves without any merit. Opposite to them are some who know how to expound religion and whatever is stated how to realize it. Such persons are of pleasing aspect. Man is asked to realize the unity of God-head and follow that highest truth, to realize the True Name. That should be the aim of his knowledge of words (*Akhar-giān*). According to Guru Nanak that paper, pen, inkpot and scribe are the blessed ones who has inscribed the Holy Name. With such realization, all duality is abolished. Then one realizes that God Himself is the sole Doer and all existence is His making. To grab what is the right of the other is evil as pig's flesh to the Muslim and cow's to the Hindu. Religious vow is the most sacred thing for anyone and to snatch the other's right is equal to breaking a religious vow. The Preceptor shall intercede for his followers only if and when the latter has not eaten carrion. The Guru reasons out that forbidden meat (*hrām*) does not turn lawful (*hlāl*) just by addition of condiments.

Similarly forgiveness comes by truthful acting. From falsehood is obtained false as the reward. The Guru makes it more clear by the example of five time Muslim prayer (*Nimāj*) which is performed five times a day, at five different hours and is known by five different names. The Guru says that the first prayer is truthfulness, second is the legitimate earning, the third prayer to God is for universal weal, the fourth is the sincerity of heart and mind and the fifth is the praise of God. *Kalmā* is the noble acting and this would be the character of a true Muslim. To be a truly religious and spiritual person one has to realize such qualities in oneself. For the realization of such qualities man needs a proper guidance and education from a proper Guru or Preceptor. But one who uttering falsehood eats carrion but imparts instruction to others, can not be a good teacher. Such a teacher has beguiled himself and his associates, are robbed of goodness. Opposite to this is one who has truth within and by a truthful tongue utters the holy Name. He himself treading the Lord's path, guides others too on this path. If there is a holy

sacred pilgrimage while bathing in it, all impurity may be removed but bathing in a pond (*chhaparh*) one will only cover with more filth on him and a hypocrite teacher is just like a pond (*chhaparh*). The holy preceptor is the true sacred spot who, day and night meditates on, is devoted to God's Name by which he himself finds release and helps others. He procures the release for whole creation and inspires others to contemplate the Divine Name. According to Sikh revelation one does not put efforts for oneself only, he is as much concerned with others also. Nothing is individual and isolated, not even emancipation. All spiritual concerns are societal and collective.

Man is asked to live a meaningful life, in a dignified way, which is worth living not only for oneself but for others also. Divine Light being the source of human origin man should live accordingly in laudation of God. He is reproached day and night if his doings are foul like a swan who is pecking at carrion leaving pearls aside. That life is cursed which is devoted to gobbling feed and adding bulk. He alone is truly alive in whose self is lodged the Lord. None else is truly living. A man involved in pleasures of ruling, power and wealth enacts a shameless devil's dance. Such a person is alive, lives in ignominy and whatever he consumes, is illegitimate. He goes from here in ignominy. There is no good in consuming delicacies, wearing fine dresses, cosy beds, haunts of voluptuous pleasure, keeping good armies, hordes of servants and functionaries, palaces to reside without realization of God's Name. It is of no worth to which caste one belongs but judgement will be by truthful living.

According to Sikh revelation human birth is considered the most precious opportunity provided by God to man because this is the only and best medium to realize God. Guru Tegh Bahadur says that to seek eternal joy man must seek shelter in God and one must be conscious of the fact that human birth is very hard to attain and one should utilize this opportunity.

1.6 So we have seen that the source of human rights, the values and the concept of martyrdom in Sikhism is the *Bāṇī*, the Sikh revelation. Revelation is always the manifestation, the disclosure, the evidence, the enlightenment and confirmation of the Highest

Truth which is a sign or indication for a seer to observe, reflect and understand it and convey the message to the masses and prepare them for a new path, for a change, for a transformation. Guru Nanak Dev ji, the first Guru started this process of emancipation of the down trodden, oppressed people of India from the evil forces, from tyranny of the cruel rulers and from the superstitions imposed by the religious leaders. He inspired a new hope for the liberation of the shackled minds. As said by Bhai Nand Lal Goya that he is a sacrifice to his Guru, thousand times with all his faith and firmness. as he (the Guru) has transformed men into gods and has increased the dignity of man. Even if there are thousands of suns and moons to illumine the world, still one should understand that without the Guru's guidance all remain darkness. Guru is the Light of God, with whose grace and advice his mind has been enlightened.

While writing about the first Guru, Nanak Dev, Bhai Nand Lal says that he, the Guru-light is that who spread the light of God in abundance, he illumined with the light of Truth and Faith, the light which showed the path of God. The lamp of Guru Nanak's holy sayings is the miracle of God. He is the highest in the time to instruct and advise the worldly people and he is the one who recommends Truth and is a witness to the Truth in the two worlds i.e. here and hereafter. God has bestowed on him the honour of being *Guru* of the two worlds, and his person is Truth and he is compassionate to the sinners. The special ones from God's court ask for the dust of his feet. The two syllables 'N' (ਨ) of his sacred name means the "Benefactor" (*Dātā*) and "Supporter" and the inbetween vowel 'a' indicates the *ੴ ਸਾਰ* i.e. one Creator God and the last syllable 'k' means the great of the greats. His detachment uplifts the most accomplished hermits even. His elderliness is spread over here and hereafter. There is no other saint like him. Common or special, gods or invisible spirits all want to touch the dust of his feet. Even God praises him.

Bhai Nand Lal further says that all illumined elderly persons, who are accepted at God's court wish to be a sacrifice to Guru Nanak's feet. With his grace the worldly people have ascended as

gods and his spiritual light is every where, here and hereafter. His followers are becoming good to best day by day and their person is becoming praise worthy. God is elevating their respect, recognition and sign everyday. When with God's Grace Guru Nanak was bestowed with the honour of being Guru of two worlds then he made supplication to God that he is a servant and slave to God and is the dust of the feet of God's special and common people. Still God ordained that the honour of being a Guru of the two worlds has been affixed upon him because God Himself is residing in him and God does as He Will and what He does is always a justice. God asked Nanak to show the path of God's praise to people and to become the mediator of the hearing, uttering and remembering of God's Name. God assured him to be with his side, helping him on this path. God asked Guru Nanak to make a commitment to God and He would illumine people with His light. He (God) asked to remove the sense of duality from people's hearts and to show them the straight path. Then the Guru (Guru Nanak) prayed to God that he (Guru) is nothing before God. How can he transform people's hearts? What is he before God's Godness? But he would follow what God ordains him with all his mind and heart. He would never waver from the path. Then the Guru prayed to God that He (God) is the One Who is the Leader and the Director, Who shows the way, transforms the hearts of the people and is always with them.

This is the greatness of Guru Nanak as visualized by Bhai Nand Lal. God revealed His mission to Guru Nanak for the emancipation of the down-trodden contemporary society, not only for that time but for all times to come. The whole of Guru Nanak's personality is a sign of the proclamation of the Truth.

The ninth light in this process is Guru Tegh Bahadur who established with his martyrdom the meaning and concept of liberty and freedom in Sikhism and how to protect it not only for themselves but for others also. While visualising the Ninth Guru, Bhai Nand Lal says that the Ninth true Kingship is the chief of those chiefs who are the propounders and protectors of very very new tradition and who keep and protect the Truthfulness. In spite of being all powerful and mighty, the ninth Guru bows to God's

Will and follow it and hides his great wisdom and grandeur. He is the tester of the role-model Sikhs, sustainer of the spiritual ones, chief of the great gods and high of the God-oriented, imbued in God-consciousness and permanent counsellor of Truth. He is chief of the selected people and master of the truthful ones. The syllable 't' (ਤ) in his name indicates the faith in God and holds the Will of God and the vowel 'e' is the symbol of complete, total, great faith and the respectable 'g' (ਗ) tells that he is a complete image of compassion, forgiveness and toleration and gentleness. The syllables 'b' and 'h' (ਬਹ) combined of his name indicate that he is the best teacher who illuminates the minds.

The vowel 'a' of Godly pleasures of his name is the beauty of faith, righteousness and justice and 'd' (ਦ) of Godly vision is the master of two worlds. The last syllable 'r' (ਰ) recognises the secret of the first step towards spiritual progress i.e. code of conduct (ਰਹਿਤ) and is the true foundation of the highest spirituality. (ਰਹੀਕਤ). This is how Bhai Nand Lal perceives his Guru through his proper name Tegh Bahadur.

Guru Tegh Bahadur, from head to feet is the embodiment of compassion, who beautifies the congregation of authority and grandeur. The light of righteousness is illumined with his sacred being, the two worlds are illumined with the bounty of his grace. God selected him from among the selected ones and considered his tolerance and submission to God's Will as the highest one. God promoted his greatness from among the acknowledged ones and with His Grace bestowed upon him such a honour, that people bow before him. People are hopeful with the help of his majestic support and the light of the revelation uttered by him is above all the lights of teachings.

1.6 So we have seen what Bhai Nand Lal Goya has visualised about the first Guru Nanak Dev and the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur. One thing which comes out very clearly from what he has recorded in his book *Joti-Bigāsi*, is that there does not remain any difference between God and the True Preceptor because in the realization of Truth which itself is God, he transcends all human limitations and becomes the image of God in the true sense of the word. As averred by the fifth Guru Arjan Dev that God has

made all the creation, the continents, the nether regions, countries and the worlds subject to death. He Himself is immutable and immortal. Whosoever meditates on Him becomes immutable. God's devotee is made in God's Image. Do not think of him as different because of his human frame, like waves of water rising in numerous ways, the water is absorbed in the water again.

Revelation is always expressed in symbols. Every revelation has got its own symbols. divine inspirations, scriptures, prophets and their missions for the emancipation of the oppressed and down-trodden people and the societies of their times. The words, the ideas, ideals, sayings, the lives of the prophets these all are the symbols. For example the Son of God, the Holy Ghost, the river, the cave all these are symbols in semitic spirituality for the proclamation of the highest Truth and to guide the people on the path of Truth. The Sikh revelation is in the form of *Bāni*, the process of which is *joti* (the light) and *jugati* (the way). The Guru is the medium of the manifestation of the Truth by God for the guidance of the people who want to tread on the path of Truth.

The Sikh revelation transformed the traditional outlook of the Indian people towards life, transformed their minds, outlook, and removed that mist which had clouded their vision and outlook for centuries. The Guru provided the rational basis for the human values as e.g. the Guru says that those who sowed the whole seed reaped honour, and now if the broken seed is sown how shall it sprout. For a seed to sprout there are certain conditions which must be fulfilled. First the seed should be in whole, not a broken one. Then the time and season must be appropriate, only then the seed will sprout. A plain cloth without the application of proper chemical will not catch the dye. Similarly the mind in vat of God's fear should be steamed and the chemical of modesty be applied and the mind should be dyed in devotion to God. Then the touch of falsehood shall never cling to it. This showed the people the way of liberation and safety, led them out of darkness and inspired them to tread the straight path of illumination. The Guru transformed the weak, meek and submissive people into the nation of strong people like lions who can protect the honour, dignity and faith not only of themselves but of others also.

All this spiritual transformation inspired the Sikh mind to remain free and sovereign always, the poetic expression of which is *Rāj Karegā Khālsā*. The litany *Rāj Karegā Khālsā* is the part of daily Sikh prayer (*Ardās*) it is not the part of revelation. This being an important part of Sikh theology it is recorded by Bhai Nand Lal, who is very prominent Sikh theologian after Bhai Gurdas and almost contemporary of another very important Sikh theologian Bhai Mani Singh. Definitely it might have been recorded after 1699 A.D. the year of the creation of the *Khālsā*. The source of its inspiration being revelation, it is there that man is taught neither to inflict fear upon others nor to live in fear of anyone. It indicates the creation of such a society in which man can live in the congenial atmosphere and have the freedom for his spiritual experience and can promote spirituality. Another thing which is also co-related is that it is the creation of a society without fear and enmity. As the fifth Nanak Guru Arjan Dev said "neither is any my foe. nor I am enemy of any. The Supreme Being has spread His visible expanse within myself. We have got this realization from the holy preceptor "and" now none is our foe not a stranger, we are in accord with all. All that God does we found good and we received such a wisdom from the holy Preceptor. God is pervasive in all His creation and Nanak is in bloom at this sight."

Rāj Karegā Khālsā being the part of daily Sikh prayer indicates that *Guru Khālsā Panth* will have to struggle continuously for the creation of such a society and eventual acceptance of their sovereign spiritual position. That is why history did not create *khālsā* but *khālsā* created history. It also indicates the dynamic nature of the *khālsā*. Another important point related with it we find in the Sikh revelation is that it provides a qualifying model. Man is to achieve his destination by qualifying. He has to qualify to rise, to become capable of that spiritual achievement and the same model is applicable to the worldly living. As said by Guru Nanak Dev, "Such occupy the throne as for it are fit. These are such who by Master's guidance annul five evils and turn as God's humble servants. Who realizing God existing since primal time, ever present, and who

have lifted illusion and doubt." So this qualifying model makes the man to struggle more, to remain ever active and improve himself and his surroundings. It is the ascending model in which one rises above towards the goal. As already mentioned, Bhai Nand Lal Goya recorded that followers of the Guru i.e. the Sikhs were becoming best from good day by day.

1.7 The book "*The Sikh Perspective of Human Values*" is a collection of Guru Nanak and Guru Tegh Bahadur commemorative lectures delivered annually under the auspices of the department of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies*, Punjabi University, Patiala. Guru Nanak commemorative lectures were started in 1969 at the fifth centenary celebration of Guru Nanak Dev's birth and Guru Tegh Bahadur commemorative lectures were started in 1987 under the sanction of the then Punjab Governor. Prominent scholars from various fields have been delivering lectures from these two platforms every year and it has been almost a tradition with the department to print them in book form separately. Some of them had been printed immediately assessing their immediate relevance and importance. This time we have combined these two types of lectures. Our respectable Vice Chancellor Dr. J.S. Puar feels that whenever a scholar delivers the lectures it has immediate relevance and importance and to print it after a long gap is not very much appreciable. So it is almost a policy for future. This immediate compliance will be in the hands of scholars in the form of a book on "*The Sikh Identity*" by Dr. J.S. Grewal the Ex-Vice Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, which comprises the Guru Nanak commemorative lectures of 1996-97.

The first two lectures in the present book were delivered by late Dr. Tarlochan Singh as Guru Tegh Bahadur commemorative lectures in 1990. Dr. Tarlochan Singh was a very well known scholar in the field of Sikh philosophy and theology. He had many books to his credit. He travelled far and wide, to the countries like Canada and America to attend the seminars in this context. In the first lecture he deals with the historical perspective of the ninth Nanak from different angles and named it as "*Five Aspects of Guru Tegh Bahadur's Life*". Along with the

life of the Guru, he has discussed the education system in the Guru period as well as its present condition in the Sikh institutions especially. Then he has thrown light on the devotional worship and contemplative meditation as depicted in the hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur. He has discussed the virtues of truth, love and compassion and the value called humanism as they are depicted in Sikh revelation, especially in the *Bāni* of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Alongwith this he discusses the social and political awakening brought about by the Sikh religion. In the end he elaborates the concept of martyrdom in Sikhism and the uniqueness of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom. Dr. Tarlochan Singh has discussed in detail the historical, moral, spiritual and theological aspects of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur. In the second lecture Dr. Tarlochan Singh has opined on the mystical aspect and human values propounded by the Gurus especially by Guru Tegh Bahadur in his *Bāni*. The scholar has highlighted the special features of Sikh mysticism and its distinctiveness from the earlier Indian mystical traditions. He has made a comparative study not only with the Indian tradition but with Greek and Sufi mysticism. He has analysed how the Gurus felt about the agony of man, and showed him the way to come out of it and transcend this suffering and realize permanent bliss and laid down the foundation of freedom of man as a whole, freedom for the total humanity from every type of bondage which hinder the realization of God's grace within and without. The path of freedom showed by the Gurus is not ascetic but societal. While doing this analytical study Dr. Tarlochan Singh has taken account of the modern studies in the field of religion. The scholar is known for his sincere devotion to the cause of Sikh religious thought.

The next two lectures are by Dr. Madanjit Kaur, Professor in the department of Guru Nanak Studies of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. She delivered these lectures in 1990. She has done the comparative study of Guru Nanak Dev's thought with the Indian religious traditions and has tried to highlight the distinctive features of Guru Nanak's philosophy which differentiate it from the other Indian religious traditions. At the same she has tried to establish the independence of Sikh revelation

and rejected the theory of continuity with the Vedic traditions and the theory of amalgamation of Hinduism and Islam. In the second lecture she has discussed the concept of human rights as visualized by Guru Nanak Dev in his *Bāṇī*.

The third lecture *Rāj Karegā Khālsā* was delivered by S. Surain Singh Dhanoa, (I.A.S. Retd.), in 1994-95. S. Surain Singh Dhanoa, though retired as a senior I. A. S. officer, he has very keen interest in history, especially the Sikh history. He has been attached with the research in history as a fellow in the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Simla for a long period. In this lecture he has tried to define the terms like *Khālsā*, *Gurmukh* and the meaning of the litany *Rāj Karegā Khālsā*.

Naturally the views expressed in these five lectures, by the three eminent scholars, are their own and it is neither necessary nor possible to agree with each and every idea propounded by the scholars. Our only purpose is to present these ideas to the readers in the form of a book. I am very grateful to these three scholars for accepting our invitation and made these lectures possible. I am very thankful to them also on behalf of the department of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies*, Punjabi University, Patiala. It is due to the kind co-operation of Dr. Joginder Singh Puar, our Vice Chancellor that we have been able to hold these lectures. He has been kind enough to allow the publication of this work and moreover to publish these lectures every year in future. We owe a lot to his kind interest and support in the publication of different works in our department.

My very special thanks are due to Dr. Hazara Singh, without whose insight and technical knowledge it is not possible to have such attractive publications. He not only takes keen interest in their beautiful publication but in their circulation also. My thanks are due to my steno S. Parminder Singh Sandhu, who always works hard to prepare and arrange the manuscripts. I hope the readers will enjoy reading this book and try to share their views with us.



FIVE ASPECTS OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR'S LIFE

DR. TARLOCHAN SINGH

To a superficial observer, life of Guru Tegh Bahadur, apart from his unique martyrdom, appears to be uneventful. He is seen as an apostle who lived like a recluse and acted like a quietist. From the day he ascended the pontific throne in 1664 AD. to his day of martyrdom on November 11, 1675 AD., there always was around him a halo of divine serenity and a radiant glow of undisturbed calmness, which brought peace and solace around him wherever he went. The world he saw around him in the middle of seventeenth century was quite different from the world of sense perceptions today. And yet he presented his thoughts and reflections of life, society, the world as we should see today and as the future generations should continue to see in future, no matter what are the circumstances created by historical situations now and at all times to come.

Guru Tegh Bahadur tells us that the world is a bridge between Ocean of Existence (*sansāra*) whose shores are birth and death and we should not hope to sojourn here for long. The travellers on the bridge are kith and kin by ties of human relations. People who acquire wealth, property, power, or temporal and even religious authority upset these relations by their ignorance, vanity, greed and lust for absolute power. In this journey of life we meet people suddenly. Even when there are strong bonds of love, the mother parts with the son, a brother is separated from brother and a lover is snatched from his beloved. Joy and sorrow, hatred and love, fame and humiliation make this life beyond comprehension. Our ignorance about the truth of life darkens and oppresses our minds even when it is loaded with the knowledge of many secular subjects. It is to show a clear cut path for all humanity- a path to enlightenment and Truth that the Sikh Gurus gave us a distinct way of life known as *Gurmat* : Path

of the Enlightened.

The whole life of Guru Tegh Bahadur reflects this Path of challenges one has to face. All those who go through the Saga of his life are profoundly impressed by his imposing personality and the calm courage with which he faced unbelievable challenges of his life and integrity. We can feel the power of the historical Man. In every gracious act recorded in his biographical account there is a message to simple peasants, artisans, rural pundits and yogis, and this message was meant to reach all human hearts all over the world, because the situations in which this message was given exists in all societies and in all countries. In this lecture we are discussing five major aspects of his life.

1.1 EDUCATION AND SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE ACCORDING TO THE IDEALS OF SIKHISM

Under the instructions of Baba Nanak, Guru Angad organised the first educational institution in which Sikh boys and girls could learn what they could not learn either in a Hindu *Guru-kul* where they were taught *Sanskrit* and *Vedic* lore nor in Islamic *Maktabas* where they could study only Persian, Arabic and Islamic literature and the Koran. The basic education in this Sikh seminary, generally known as Sikh *Pathshala* was to be given in Punjabi which was now given its own script, *Gurmukhi* but they were also taught *Sanskrit* and *Persian*, and Medieval Hindi along with *Prakrit* and *Appabransh*. The best products of this Sikh School of education included Guru Arjan and Bhai Gurdas in the early period. It is in this school that talented missionaries, which included women, were trained. The missionaries were given a highly respectable name which indicated their status. They were called *Masands* (Per: *Masands* - next to the throne). Later on they became corrupt and disreputable. The best products of the later period were Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. Missionaries and scholars trained in this Sikh School included countless missionaries who branched off into *Udasis*, *Nirmalas*, *Sewa Panthis* and countless poets and scholars of his *darbar*.

In the Sikh Scriptures the Sikh Gurus criticize all such

education which does not stimulate the mind to aspire after deeper knowledge, and which does not give spiritual satisfaction. All books give knowledge of some important subject which is useful either in our profession or in our other human needs. But what is the use of knowledge which does not illumine life ? Of what use is our vast literature in each language, if our education fails to transform our knowledge into wisdom of life ? The aim of education which Guru Tegh Bahadur received was to make a person truly human, spiritual and wise and quite competent to earn his living.

The Sikh boys and girls who lived with the Gurus and were associated with the *durbār* had opportunity to get disciplined not only in moral and spiritual life but also to get training in animal husbandry, gardening, farming, technical education necessary for building, construction and manufacturing weapons. Education in literature, religious studies of classics, scriptural studies, music and art had achieved the highest excellence during the Guru period.

An education which only stimulates the passions and sharpens the mind, tends to destroy the morals and spiritual perceptions of a young person is dangerous and leads to disastrous results. An education which has intellectual openness and imparts vast knowledge on various subjects is different from aesthetic experience and inner illumination, which helps the inner-person in us to grow into a morally strong and spiritually pure human being who can face the challenges of life and serve society in a number of ways. The Sikh Gurus, from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, wanted to create apostles of learning and Sages of spirits, and during their own period they created a galaxy of geniuses in these fields. The seeds sown by the Gurus have flowered in the Spring of cycles of our history and withered in the autumn of our dark periods only to bloom again into new gardens and new flowers and fruits.

The purpose of the education in these Sikh institutions of the Guru period was to help all to find their soul, their God and their sense of destiny, and with this awakened consciousness they worked miracles in whichever field they worked. In these Sikh

institutions boys and girls from the richest families as well as the poorest sons of cobblers, artisans and peasants had equal opportunity. The most downtrodden outcasts of Indian societies became wise in knowledge, fearless in moral and spiritual strength, strong and equal in their love of God and Truth. Education gave them a new birth, a new personality, and the right to be leaders in whichever field they entered. Countless of these inspired souls have left an indelible mark on the pages of history—a history which the enemies and detractors of Sikhs are trying to distort and obliterate. This education disciplined the tongue, the senses, the intellect, the heart and the soul.

Giving a vivid portrayal of the continuing problem of our youth the eminent Jewish philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel writes in his book *"The Insecurity of Freedom"*, "The problem of our youth is not youth. The problem is the spirit of our age : denial of transcendence, the vapidness of values, emptiness in the heart, the decreased sensitivity to the imponderable quality of the spirit, the collapse of communication between the realm of tradition and the inner world of the individual. The central problem is that we do not know how to think, how to pray, how to cry, how to resist the deceptions of too many persuaders." He adds, " we prepare the pupil for employment, for holding job. We do not teach him how to grow inwardly, how to say no to his own self. We teach him how to adjust to the public; we do not teach him how to cultivate privacy. In our classroom we shy away from fundamental issues; How should one deal with evil ? What shall we do about? What is the meaning of history ? How should one face the problem of loneliness?"¹

Our corrupt leadership has destroyed these sacred institutions but the roots which can bear fruit are still there. We have produced a whole generation of drug addict youth and those who want instant change have taken up guns. Our misguided young generation does not know that we can prepare instant coffee but we cannot have instant revolutions and renewal. We and our central and regional governments must realize that youth cannot be controlled by terrorising laws and repression. In the Universities and educational institutions we must realize that we

cannot just preach to the youth to live in obedience, to be loyal to family, friends and our Prophets and deliver long lectures on principles and ideals on which the whole teacher community does not act.

The principles and ideals of Sikh educational system during Guru period prepared Sikh youth to such perfection that all the Sikh Gurus after Guru Ram Das (fourth Guru) with the exception of Guru Tegh Bahadur, were below twenty when they ascended the pontific throne. All the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh who suffered unprecedented martyrdom for their faith and freedom were below twenty. The Sikh Misal leaders like Jassa Singh Ahluwalia (a poor widow's son, who belonged to Kalal-wine distillers family) and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia (a carpenter's son) were below twenty when they were selected as youth leaders of skilled regiments. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was called the boy King when the British saw him first, as Maharaja was below twenty years.

We have hundreds of Khalsa Colleges and Khalsa Schools but the spirit of the ideals set by Sikh institutions does not exist there. In many places we have installed communists and atheists as Professors and Principals. We have built other Foundations and Institutions in the name of the Gurus in India and abroad, but they are monumental edifices governed by dead soul whose only ability is how not to do constructive work. The need of the hour is to give these institutions a new life, a new meaning and purpose by urging corrupt and irresponsible managements to change before the stormy winds of change overtake them, and thus make an effort to preserve the true ideals of our Prophets and Sage-Leaders.

Like the conditions prevailing in Guru-period, the problem of our country and more so the region in which we live is basically the problem of highly corrupted religious institutions, perverted social and political institutions, dishonest and morally short sighted, if not blind leadership. Reverence for the wise and enlightened dialogue with younger generation, is as important to the dignity of the flowering young people as it is for upholding the wisdom and shining experiences of the old. Let us reorganise all

institutions on the principles and ideals of our Master and save a whole generation in which we live from decay, degeneration and destruction.

1.2. DEVOTIONAL WORSHIP AND CONTEMPLATIVE MEDITATIONS IN SOLITUDE AND SECLUSION (TAPASYA)

The word *bhaj* and its derivatives *bhaju*, and *bhajai*, *bhajan* occur about thirty times in the *Padavalis* and *Shlokas* of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Its root meaning is to prefer, choose, to save, to honour, to serve, love and adore. In religious traditions it means to worship, glorify, contemplate, meditation, sing the praise of. Every higher religion has its devotional worship as well as systems and techniques of meditation. The word *bhaj* occurs in ancient *Sanskrit* traditions.

Early one morning Shankracharya was going to the Ganges for his daily ablution. He saw one of his students walking on the banks of the river reciting something. It was compulsory for all his students who came to study philosophy to study *Sanskrit* language and grammar. This enthusiastic student was repeating and memorising the rules of grammar. Shankracharya was shocked at the folly of the youngman who was wasting the ambrosial hours of early morning on merely learning rules of grammar. He composed 17 verses, repeating in every verse the lines :

*bhaj gobindam, bhaj gobindam,
bhaj gobindam mudmate*

In each verse he tells us that all other ritual prayers and worship are useless.

Many are those whose locks are matted,
Many whose heads are closely shaved,
Many who pluck out all their hair;
Some of them wearing robes of ochre,
Some of them clad in other colours-
All these things for their stomach's sake.
Seeing Truth revealed before them,
Still the deluded see It not.

Worship Govinda, Worship Govinda
 Worship Govinda O foolish one,
 Rules of grammar profit nothing
 Once the hour of death draws nigh – 4.

This hymn is addressed to *Govinda (Krishna)*. Other similar hymns are addressed to *Shiva, Durga, Vishnu*. Guru Tegh Bahadur urges his devotees to concentrate on the prayerful worship of One Beloved God and seek refuge in His Presence and solace in His Love.

*sañg terai hari basat nit
 nis básur bhaju táhi mit.*

The Gracious Lord ever abides within thee.
 Contemplate Him day and night, O Friend.

Adi Granth : Basant p. 1187

*gun gobind gáyio nahī janamu akáarth kīnu
 kahu nánk hari bhaju maná, jeh bidhi jal kau mīnu.*

You have never sung the praise of God,
 You have lived your life in vain.
 Says Nanak : worship and adore the Lord
 As a fish loves the waters of deep sea.

Shloka : I, p. 1426

Prayerful adoration leading to intense and profound contemplative meditations, are the moral and spiritual pillars of Guru Tegh Bahadur's life and work. Prayer and worshipful adoration is a moment of communication between a human being and God. During these moments of prayer God knows our hopes and aspirations. Through these longing prayers we place before Him our agony and pangs, our aspirations and silent wishes. For some it is an act of purification and for others it is silent cry to the Giver to fulfil our needs. Prayer or glorifying God's attributes to seek His nearness is a call to God to intervene in the critical moments of distress and personal suffering. No matter how fervent the prayer, and no matter how acute the distress, as Sikhs of Baba Nanak we must end our prayer saying "Let Thy Will prevail Lord; sweet is Thy Will" (*terá bháná mītha láge*) because more often than not even suffering for a cause is a gift of His

grace, and it ultimately gives much more joy and sublime experience than the pride and pleasure of vast wealth of kingdom.

We need not read any book to learn how to pray and adore God. We need no knowledge of Pundits and Academics to sit and concentrate on prayer.

Guru Tegh Bahadur repeatedly tells us that when the greatest sinners and even animals have remembered God in utter distress, the Supreme Saviour and Protector of the destitute has come and given His gracious power and protection.

*ajāmal kau antikāl mahi
nārāyan sudhi āyi
jān gati kou jogisur bānchhat
so gati chhin mahi pāi,
nāhin guṇu nāhin kichhu bidyā
dharamu kaumu gaji kina.
Nanak birdu rām kā dekhhu
abhai dānu tih dinā.*

Ajamal, the sinner gained consciousness of God
Just before death when all was lost,
By remembering the Saviour, Lord God.
Within a moment he attained the divine State
For which great sages aspire and crave.
The elephant that was saved
From drowning by the Lord
Had neither any virtue for learning,
Nor spiritual consciousness and thought;
No pious act the elephant had performed
Such, O Nanak, is the ennobling grace of God
That even when the elephant remembered Him
He was blessed with the fearless State.

A.G. Ramkali, p. 901

Ajāmal (Sk. Ajamila) was a Brahmin of Kanauj, who though learned became a drunkard and fell in love with a beautiful harlot. Condemned for wasting his father's fortune on her and his profligate life he started living with his unchaste wench and had six children from her. He named the youngest Nārāyaṇa (an attributive Name of God). On death bed he cried for Nārāyaṇa

his son, and this very cry in deep agony of death pangs became a yearning cry to his God to save him. God's saving grace came to his aid and he attained liberation. The painful cry for the Beloved Saviour awakened in him his dormant creative spirituality and within moments the daresness of sin and lust vanished and he gained consciousness of the blissful peace of His Presence. It is, perhaps to bring out the reality of such a situation that Berdyaev writes; "Lust is a means of escape from boredom when goodness provides no such escape. This is why it is very difficult, almost impossible, to conquer evil passions negatively, through negative asceticism and prohibitions. They can only be conquered positively, through awakening the positive and creative spiritual force opposed to them. Creative fire, divine Eros overcomes lust and evil passions. It burns up evil, boredom and false strivings engendered by it. We must preach, therefore, not the morality based upon the annihilation of will but upon its enlightenment, not upon the humiliation of man and his external submission to God but upon the creative realization by man of the divine in life - of the values of truth, goodness and beauty." ²

This creative awakening to overcome fear with fearlessness, to overpower darkness with Light comes from God as His Grace and divine inspiration. It comes not only to the sinners like Ajámal and prostitutes like Ganiká but even to animals like the legendary elephant Gajendra. It is believed that near the mountain Trikuta, there was a grove called Rituman in one of its fruitladen valleys. Close to it there was a vast and deep lake. The lord of elephants of this valley (Gajendra) was moving with its herd, when it entered the lake to quench its thirst. A powerful alligator indignantly seized the elephant by foot and dragged the lord of elephants into deeper waters. In this dire distress when he thought of God and prayed for his aid, he attained the fearless state and got released from the clutches of the alligator.

Prayer is thus not mere muttering of any *mantras*, nor of formal recitations of ritual prayers. It is an effort of the will and consciousness of a person to seek refuge in the Presence of the Almighty. Prayer is an intense yearning in which we want God to hear the stifled cries of our heart and we want to hear the voice of

God in the silence of our soul. One does not have to hold the beads of rosary in ones hands. God hears our unspoken prayers. He knows our inner plight if we are sincere and have faith in His grace and His healing powers. The heart's stammering, and helpless yearnings of all creatures uttered in perfect sincerity reach the ears of God. He responds to them. He comes to the aid of the devotees.

He who prays to God with utter devotion and raises his hands in supplication glorifies God in all he does and remembers Him in his heart and soul. This constant devotional prayer leads to a life of meditations and contemplations. His attitude towards God is that of profound reverence, humility and submission. He stands before the Lord as a dedicated servant stands before a Kind Supernal sharing His Majesty and glory.

Meditation and contemplation of God was an inseparable part of Guru Tegh Bahadur's life long before he ascended the Pontifical throne, and throughout his life afterwards. His meditation cell in Bakala preserved and an object of reverence for the pilgrims tells us how he loved to spend his days and nights in intense contemplative meditations in isolation and seclusion within his home. A similar meditation cell in Anandpur a short distance from his residence indicates that meditating in a secluded cell had become a part of his life. Even during his travels in the East where he stayed for over a month a room was set apart for his meditations and these rooms are still revered as such and preserved in their original form in Banaras, Allahbad and Dacca.

Every religious system has its own methods, techniques and goals of meditation. *Guru Granth* is full of these techniques and contemplative methods of Sikh mystical path. Guru Tegh Bahadur's approach was aesthetic and practical. We should not search God in caves and forests but only within ourself.

*káhe re ban khojan jái,
sarb nivási sadá alepá tohi sangi samái. 1. Raháou
puhap madhi jiou basu basatu hai,
mukar máhi jaise chhái
taise hi hari base nirantari
ghat hi khojahu bhái.*

*bāhari bhītari eko jānhu
 ehū gur gyānu batāi.
 jan nanak binu āpā chīnai
 mitai na bhram ki kai*

Wherefore go to the forests in search of God ?

He is all-pervading and ever detached.

He is the Indwelling Spirit,

Ever living with thee. *Refrain.*

Just as fragrance resides in the flower

Just as the image is reflected in the mirror

So the Light of God dwells within thee;

Seek Him O brother in your own Self-I

This Supreme Truth, the Guru has revealed

Know the One Eternal outside and within thee.

Says Nanak without realising your true Self,

The mind's delusion shall never be dispelled. — 2

A.G. Rag Sorath, p. 684

Guru Tegh Bahadur urges us not to renounce society, and not to go to the forests and mountain caves in search of God. The perfect Lord dwells within all of us, so one should never go outside society in search of Him. Solitude can be found within the society for meditating on His Presence within.³ What does a seer seek in solitude ? He intuitionally probes the mystery and secret (*maram*) of the Beloved who resides within us.⁴ He seeks refuge at His feet within the realm of his heart (*ur antar saran gahi*).

Men cannot become holy and sanctified by merely becoming hermits and monks. But some seclusion and solitude is absolutely necessary for meditations and contemplative prayers. True Solitude can be acquired within the home. One may isolate himself and yet live in the egoistic seclusion of his pride and vanity.

"Mere living alone does not isolate a man, mere living together does not bring men into communion. The common life can either make one more of a person or less of a person, depending whether it is truly common life or merely life in a crowd. To live in communion, in genuine dialogue with others is

absolutely necessary, if man is to remain human. But to live in the midst of others, sharing nothing with them but the common noise and the general distraction, isolates a man in the worst way, separates him from reality in a way that is almost painless. It divides him off and separates him from other men from his true Self. There is no true solitude except interior solitude. And interior solitude is not possible for anyone who does not accept his right place in relation to other men.⁵ Guru Tegh Bahadur sought seclusion of the Cell and a closed room to be with God Alone, to converse with Him and to seek the grace and peace of abiding by His Will. Rightly has a sage said that "religion is what one does with his solitariness".

We know the loneliness of guilt, the loneliness of a destitute life of poverty. We know the loneliness of physical and mental suffering. We know the loneliness of God : The meditations inspired by Guru Tegh Bahadur are based on an assured faith, complete trust in Him, fellowship in Him and preoccupation in Him. The seeker lives in a state of watchfulness, concentrating on Him alone. Such a meditation brings Light to the soul when we abandon everything", wrote Isaac of Nineveh, "and our mind goes out to seek Him Alone. There will be no thought in it of anything which screens its face from the aspects of the Lord of the Universe. The more the mind abandons the thought of visible things and the more it thinks of the future hope, in accordance with the degree of elevation above bodily things and intercourse with them, to the same extent it will be stabilised and become clear during prayer."⁶ He further adds, "Loneliness serves the purpose that we should have a place where we can converse with God in solitude. Everyone who loves God lives a solitary life. If though lovest truth, thou must love silence. This will make thee illumined in God like the sun, and it will deliver thee from the idle thoughts of ignorance; silence will unite thee with God."⁷

All Sikh meditations and contemplations are based on recollection of His attributes and remembrance of his Name. By calling His Name and by stringing His Name to our very breath the soul dwells in God and achieves perfect tranquility and the peace of certainty.

Yet the remembrance of His Name is not a mere ritual exercise. "A Name", says Paul Tillich is never an empty sound; it is a bearer of power; it gives Spiritual Presence to the Unseen. For the invocation of the holy does not leave us unaffected. If it does not heal us it may disintegrate us. This is the seriousness of the use of the divine Name. This is the danger of religion, and even of anti religion. For in both the Name of God is used as well as misused."⁸

His Name is "*gyān ratan*" the precious jewel of divine Wisdom, the *Chintamani* : the shining diamond whose dazzling light dispels the darkness of ignorance (*timer agyān*). This pearl of wisdom is there in every one. Sometimes it is snatched away by evil passions and man is left in spiritual poverty and misery. Otherwise it remains hidden till either the grace of God or an illumined Saint and apostle comes unseen and even unnoticed and reveals it in our heart. This revelation gives a new direction in our life and transfigures our whole being. Our sleeping soul wakes up filled with the unending music of remembering Him and seeking refuge in Him.

1.3 TRUTH, LOVE, COMPASSION AND HUMANISM

Guru Tegh Bahadur's life of intense meditation was a life long *tapasyā*; austere concentration on personal self-denial in Sikh religious tradition. We make the mistake of using the word *tap* - *sādhanā* exclusively with *hatha-yoga*, although the word was used by ancient *Rishis* and the Buddhist savants long before *hatha-yoga* came into existence. It has been used with different connotations in *Sanjnyā*, Buddhist, Jain and Patanjali's *Yoga* tradition. In Sikh tradition the word simply means a continuous and sustained effort in devotional and mystical practices.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's *tapasyā*: intense and austere concentration on his devotion to God, reflected in his historical personality all the divine attributes of a prophet whose life was an embodiment of the Attributes of God. The attributes which shine forth in all his written word and activities are Truth, Love, Compassion and Humanism.

Intense and life-long meditations and communion with God

had led Guru Tegh Bahadur to mystical states and experiences on which the *Guru Granth* has thrown considerable light. His heart was pierced with immense love and compassion of God and he had reached the ultimate experience of a Prophet. His personality radiated the highest spirituality and the noblest virtues of ultimate union with God.

The *Satguru* lived in almost unbroken consciousness of divine Presence and God sustains his lovers with perpetual vision of His Light and Majesty and inspire them with His own attributes of love, compassion, fearlessness, justice and freedom. Prophets like Guru Tegh Bahadur impart faith and belief of high moral and spiritual ideals not through abstract logic, metaphysical debates and academic arguments but by charity, wisdom and spiritual exaltation. They stimulate inner depths of thought, poetical feeling, musical perceptions and beauty of character. They detach us from vulgar passions, mental darkness, craze for materialistic and hedonistic path of life and encourage us to maintain a robust contact of life.

There is a profound joy in renouncing all vulgar pleasure to achieve the sublime peace of the enlightened and cultured. There is immense satisfaction and inner spiritual exaltation in renouncing wealth and property for the sake of these pearls of wisdom which are the source of the best we find in Sikhism and its moral and spiritual culture. It is this inspirational wisdom of the Gurus (*gurmat*) which defeats degrading sorrow, sadness, lamentation and gives us calmness and spiritual insight. Distracting forces within us and outside us are defeated.

In order to understand the eternal life Guru Tegh Bahadur urges us repeatedly to remember and contemplate the death. It is by seriously contemplating the death we acquire the spiritual state of fearlessness which Guru Tegh Bahadur calls *abhai pada*, the mystical and spiritual state of fearlessness. Such profound thoughts of Sikhism are close to the moral and spiritual idealism of Plato who says that such persons are "true votaries of knowledge who practise nothing else but how to die or to meet death." (Phaidon 644)

Human life, as Guru Tegh Bahadur's life and works reveal,

is related to a higher purpose and not only with our needs. Anyone can be taught and trained to strive for one's need, acquire rich food and clothing and satisfy vulgar appetites, but few can be inspired to pursue the Goal of life and keep on striving till the goal achieved. The one lesson this Path of Sikhism teaches is "how to be human" how to uphold human values reflected by morally and spiritually perfect apostles. They cease to be "seekers" of Wisdom and Truth. They become "tasters" of truth. They disseminate moral and spiritual truths to the deserving. The seeds sown by Guru Tegh Bahadur in all the states of North India from Punjab to Assam continue to grow and flower. Even though the trees that have grown out of these seeds have been cut down by ruthless enemies of Sikhism, have been destroyed again and again, they continue to grow again in every new spring and yield ever new fragrant flowers.

The eternal truth of Sikhism forms its foundation and this eternal Truth shines ever so brightly in the temporal situation of every generation. In our age of new types of ambitions and highly sophisticated forms of corruption and moral degradation *dharam* and *sharam* (moral, righteousness and shame) have once more hidden their faces. They dare not come out without a veil on their faces for fear of being ridiculed, insulted and molested. Even we who talk of religion, peace, unity and integrity have closed the doors of our hearts and homes. A renewal and re-generation of the teachings of Guru Tegh Bahadur alone can bring to the fore the Truth, the compassion and humanism of the Master. He did not wait for the people to come to him. He went to the remotest corners of backward regions which were infested with tribal culture and traditions of brutality and vulgar living.

Guru Tegh Bahadur could wield the sword, the pen and the rebeck with a remarkable excellence. For him the Sword, the Pen and Music were instruments of a prophetic mission. Sikh religious atmosphere throughout history was dominated by theistic humanism. The intellectual belief in the scholastic God of abstract Vedantic and other metaphysical theories are ornamental and quite refined flights of the mind, but the Guru drew our attention to the experiential knowledge of God, the world and society

Mere reading of the Sikh Scriptures or mere listening to the sermons on the Guru's wisdom as we do in the temples may keep a person devoid of the experiential knowledge (*gyān*), if our mind and consciousness are basically inclined towards eating, drinking and multiplying our sources of physical pleasures.

gurmati suni kachhu gyān nā upjio

pasū jion udar bharaun.

On hearing the Wisdom of the Guru

No divine knowledge has dawned on me.

A. G. Dhanasari, p.685.

Knowledge is an inner intellectual and spiritual consciousness. It is not something that comes to us as theories and doctrine, but as experience of highest Truth, an experience which we must share with others. Life within us and outside us will become lovable and beautiful if we can share the warmth and light of experience with others and use it as a civilizing influence. This is true humanism which is inseparable from all activities of Sikhism.

1.4 REVOLUTIONARY SOCIAL AND POLITICAL AWAKENING

All Mughal Emperors except Akbar had an element of despotic attitude towards non-Muslims, but none was so suspicious, despotic and cruel as Aurangzeb, the shadow of whose state-terrorism started falling on the people from the day he imprisoned his father, beheaded his brother, Dara Shikoh, a friend of Guru Hari Rai. Aurangzeb was carrying on repression in the name of religion, and yet it was truly spiritual and humanistic religion which could meet the challenge of the times. It was necessary for the people to know the distinction of true religion from false religion. It was imperative for people to shed fear, to conquer their weakness of abject submission to the oppressor out of greed and vulgar ambitions. There was no dearth of priests, *pundits*, *yogis* and *sannyasins* and *darveshis* in this country but they were obsessed by such hypocrisy and pretensions that their life and activities had a demoralizing effect on the people. They turned their back to Truth in the name of religion:

*mana re gehio na gur updeshu
 kahän bheio jau münd mundäyio
 bhagvau kīno bhesu (1) ||Rahāo||
 säch chhādi kai jhūthahu lägio
 janamu akarathu khoio.
 kari parpañch udar nij pokhio
 pasü kī niyāi soyio. ||1||
 rām bhajan kī gati nahī jāni
 māvā hāthi bikānā.*

The teachings of the true Guru
 You have grasped not O hermit;
 What matters if you are a clean shaven monk
 And ochre-dyed is your garb,
 From Truth you live apart,
 And waste your life in falsehood.
 You indulge in hypocrisy and fraud,
 Only to eat to the full
 And sleep like a bull
 The path of devotion to God
 You have never sought.

A.G. Sorath, p. 633

The attitude of Sikhism towards ostentation and hypocrisy is as firm as put by Philo in the following admonition; "If a man practises ablutions and purifications, but defiles his mind while he cleanses his body; or if, through his wealth, he finds a temple at a large outlay and expense, or adorns the shrine with rich ornaments, or gives endless timber and cunningly wrought work, more precious than silver or gold - let him none the more be called religious. For he has wandered far from the path of religion, mistaking ritual for holiness and attempting to bribe the Incompatible and to flatter Him who none can flatter. God welcomes genuine service, and that is the service of a soul that offers the base and simple sacrifice of truth, but from false service, the mere display of material wealth, he turns away." (De Ebr - 40).

What causes hypocrisy and religious pretensions to rise in the heart is the desire to please the wealthy and powerful men, the

love of praise and fear of blame. That is why Guru Tegh Bahadur repeatedly admonishes us to completely shed fear and to rise above praise or blame.

Guru Tegh Bahadur teaches us humility, reverence by projecting our arrogance, limitations of human efforts, our ignorance and moral blindness in the face of God's divine majesty, power, grace, compassion and His Ultimate Truth. He makes us see our own "Self" in the mirror of our soul, where we can see the impurity of our intentions, the flimsiness of worldly relations.

Guru Hargobind was the first Guru after Guru Nanak who undertook extensive travels into the jungles of Malwa region, which apart from two other regions was known as a region of million trees (*lakhī jungle*). Guru Tegh Bahadur was about fifteen to eighteen years of age and he is believed to have accompanied his father in all his travels. That is one reason why the people of Malwa invited him again and again during these distressing years.

Guru Tegh Bahadur had among his personal devotees and admirers eminent Muslim Nawabs like Saif-ud-din of Bahadurgarh (Patiala), Rajput princes like Raja Ram Singh of Jaipur and princes of Assam and Bengal. But he was a prophet of the masses. He also went to the remotest villages and spent many days in the homes of simplest peasants and artisans. He moved about with his own entourage, his own camps, horses, carts. He went to the remotest regions and met poorest and downtrodden people from village to village, not only giving spiritual solace but personally involving himself in their problems and solving them. He got wells dug for water in their homes and fields. He bought for them cows and bullocks, and helped the artisans and the destitute in various ways. The homes of these simple folks became temples of bread and divine wisdom. They all learnt to labour in the Name of God and serve others in the Name of God. There are over two hundred such places commemorating the short visit of Guru Tegh Bahadur to these regions and many more in all the states of North India upto Assam and Orissa. His shrines in Dacca, Sylhet, Chittagong still reveal how sacred and dear are the places sanctified by Guru

Tegh Bahadur's holy feet to the people of these regions.

The political, religious and cultural awakening brought about by Guru Tegh Bahadur is revealed by the *hukamnamas* of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh found by the author in those remote regions. These *hukamnamas* reveal that elephants and many weapons came to Guru Gobind Singh from Assam and the region now known as Bangla Desh.

Guru Tegh Bahadur urged people to shed fear and prepare themselves for all the challenges one has to face in a society dominated by priests, politicians and irresponsible rulers. The attitude of Sikhism was neither other-worldly nor life-denying. The Sikh Gurus insisted on changing their attitude to the world and not running away from society and the world. This faith was not only life-affirming but ethically and spiritually all-embracing, which kept its doors open to all other religions and enlightened saints to share and participate in the Universal Truths and divine experiences of this religion. Whenever some dogmatic thinkers and self-styled fanatics have tried to close these doors they have suffered and died from moral and spiritual support from the Sikh *Panth*.

Joachim Wach says, "The influence of religion, sociologically speaking, then, is two-fold; there is a positive or cohesive integrating influence and there is a negative, destructive, disintegrating influence. A New faith creates a new world in which old conceptions and institutions may lose their meaning and *raison d'etre*. Natural and historical data become abrogated, and a new order of things replaces the old. These changes may be revolutionary, much depending on the extent to which a re-interpretation (consecration) of the traditional element is possible. The preaching of new faith, even if it be of a universal character, is addressed primarily to one group of people which may be more or less homogeneous. In culturally higher, differentiated societies the background of the converts is the heterogeneous." ⁹

The heterogeneous element was thus created even in Sikhism. There were Bihari, Bengali, Assamese Sikhs. There were Sikhs who had emerged from backward forest tribes. They differed in their mother tongue, their dresses, their regional dietary

and social habits, but their faith was in the same ten Gurus, in the same *Guru Granth* and in the same God. They obeyed the same moral code of conduct, maintained the same mode of worship and religious traditions and performed the same ceremonies at birth, marriage and death from Kabul in the west, to Assam and Bangla Desh in the East. The integrating power of Sikh doctrines and Sikh institutions like congregational prayers and *Langar* (common-kitchen) has been all embracing. The Sikh Gurus showed deep concern for not only their own followers but for all human beings who suffered under ignorance and oppression.

1.5 UNIQUENESS AND INTERPRETATION OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR'S MARTYRDOM.

The word "*Shahid*" which is used for martyrs in Sikh history is a *Persian/Arabic* word. There was no concept of martyrdom in Hindu-Buddhist history. That is why there was no word for a martyr in Hindu and Buddhist history. When the Rajputs faced such a situation where they had two alternatives: either to face suffering and humiliation or death, they preferred death by a ceremony called "*Johar*" which resembled theoretically the Roman way of ending one's life by opening one's veins in a warm water filled in a tub. Solon, one of the Seven wise men in Roman Empire and many other brave Romans met such a death. Buddhist monks, *Sannyasins* and *Yogis* burnt themselves in fire, and ended their own life to put their tormentors to shame. Self-immolation was an extreme type of self-emancipation and least humiliating escape from the ordeals of death by torture which most of the martyrs had to suffer.

A martyr is one who suffers torments, tortures and death to uphold his ideals, conviction and faith which awakens the sleeping minds of the oppressed and frightened humanity.

Writing about a saint preparing himself for martyrdom Emile Dermenghem writes, "The Saint is he who takes upon him the sins and the pain of the world; the unjust death is, for him one of his means of accomplishments. He is the "great Help" and the consolation of the people. He is a living accusation for the world; his existence insults the tyrants, his death makes tremble his

executioners, his canonisation is a victory of faith, of love and of hope." 10

Socretes was a martyr in the true sense of the word. When Jesus faced death in the face of unexpected terrors, mounting disappointments, he revealed the purity of his soul and the spiritual grandeur of his death ending in his prayer: "Thy Will be done". Guru Arjan was the first martyr of Indian history and Guru Tegh Bahadur and his companions became the most towering martyrs of history. Their sacrifices infused new idealism of liberty and human dignity in the *Sikh Panth*.

The martyrdom of Guru Gobind Singh's mother, all his four sons, and countless dear disciples throughout history convinced the Sikh people that in order to uphold their religious and political freedom, and in order to preserve their faith and institutions from the hostile forces who are trying to eliminate or assimilate them with all the subtle and crude weapons of cultural and political destruction, they must keep the spirit and flame of martyrdom burning in every heart and home.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's son Guru Gobind Singh gives a vivid portrayal of this historic martyrdom thus :

Choupai :

*tilak janjū rākhā prabh tākā
kīno bado kalū mahi sākā.
sādhan hetī itī jini karī
sisa diā paru sī na ucharī. 13
dharam het sākā jini kiā,
sisu diā paru sirraru na diā,
nātak chetak kie kukājā,
prabh logan keh āvat lājā, 14*

Dohra:

*thikar phorī dilīs siri prabh puri kīyā pyān.
Tegh Bahadur si kriyā karī na kinhun ānī. 15
Tegh Bahadur ke chalat bhayo jagat ko shok,
hai hai hai sabh jag bhayo jai jai jai sur loki,*

When I was mature enough
To shoulder duties and responsibilities
My father left for the Abode of God.

He sacrificed his life
 For protecting the rights of twice born Hindus.
 To wear their sacred thread and frontal marks.
 In this *Kali* age of moral darkness
 Guru Tegh Bahadur performed a supremely heroic act
 He gave up his head without uttering a word of agony.
 For the sake of a prophet's *Dharma* : righteous cause
 He performed this heroic sacrifice.
 He readily gave up his head,
 But he did not give up his determined conviction,
 He refused to perform a miracle
 A cheap manner of impressing people.
 True prophets of God are ashamed
 of displaying their occult powers.
 Guru Tegh Bahadur broke his earthly vase
 On the head of Aurangzeb,
 And went to the Abode of God.
 Unique was the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur,
 No one had ever done such a deed,
 (of sacrificing his life for another faith and creed)
 When Guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded,
 There was great mourning in this world
 Alas, alas, alas, rose the wailing cries from the earth,
 But shouts of Glory, Glory, Victory, Victory
 Resounded in the heavenly realms.

Bichiter Natak, Apari Katha. Chapter : 5, 13, 14, 15.

In this statement about his father's martyrdom Guru Gobind Singh gives a factual account of the historical event of the utmost importance. There is a historical aspect of it and there is a moral, spiritual and theological aspect. The historical aspect includes the cause of martyrdom, the place of martyrdom and the responsibility for beheading the Guru. Although the cause was religious, it was motivated by a political ambition of turning Hindustan into "Islamic State". The religious and cultural freedom of the Hindus, numerically a majority but politically a crushed and humiliated community was in peril.

The historical facts indicated in this statement are supported

by Bhai Mani Singh, whose eldest brother Bhai Dayal Dass suffered martyrdom, and by poets of Guru Gobind Singh's durbar like Sainapati and others. It is also supported on the basis of these *Gurbilases* and *Sakhi Pothis* of the eighteenth century.

But during the last two decades two types of historians have emerged, whose scholarship and intellectual equipment is unquestionable, but unfortunately they have directed their motivated research work towards malafied intentions of denigrating the supreme sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur, or distorting, twisting the historical facts. Some have carried their malafied intentions even to the extent of rationalizing and justifying these blood thirsty executions.

Prof. N. D. Ahuja writing on the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur gives a long list of religious persons killed by Jahangir and Aurangzeb, and he spins up fatuous and absolutely untenable arguments to bracket the martyrdom of the Gurus with the political murders and executions of religious men and some cult organization leaders. Prof. N. D. Ahuja does not know what a martyr is and he has not cared to reflect even for a moment on the martyrdom of such eminent Apostles in history as Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur. Even the common man knows that both Jahangir and Aurangzeb killed many Hindus and coreligionists who were suspects in their ambitious campaign and that included their kith and kin like the saintly and intensely religious Crown Prince Dara Shikoh. But these were innocent political victims and not martyrs for any cause.

A second campaign was initiated by two eminent and learned historians of the University; downgrading and even setting aside the evidence of Guru Gobind Singh about his father and upholding utterly unreliable Persian documents. I was in England when a stormy agitation raged on the issue. The storm first broke out in *Punjabi* newspapers, most of whose editors and columnists were propagating and condemning views without knowing what they were doing and what they were writing about. The debate then emerged on the pages of journals of the Universities and magazines. It was, however, nipped in the bud by a stunning criticism of these new theories in an article "*Who killed Guru*

Tegh Bahadur" by S. Kapur Singh.

Behind these two moves against authentic facts and historical importance of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom there were some invisible powers in Chandigarh and Delhi who provided the ill-intentioned and misleading motivation. But false constructions of history can never stand ground for long in the face of irrefutable facts of authentic history. As I am addressing the learned scholars, students and teachers of *Guru Granth Sahib*, I will not say anything beyond this on the historical aspect.

There is another aspect which was distorted by these learned scholars. It is the religious and philosophic aspect. This distortion has been made on the basis of incorrect translation of the key words in the following lines:

*dharam het säkä jin kää
sis diä par sirar nä diä.*

These lines are generally translated casually. The key words are *Dharam* : which is translated as religion; *säkä* is translated as incident and *sirar* is translated in different ways without explaining its meaning and philosophic content. The following are the correct meanings of these words :

Dharam (*Sk dharama*) is used in Sikh Scriptures (*Adi Guru Granth*, *Dasam Granth* and *Bhai Gurdas*) in the following four senses :

1. Law, usage, customary observance, *dharama-karma*.
2. Conduct, duty of a class or caste or profession.
3. Virtues, morality, good works, acts of religious merit.
4. Ultimate Justice, Divine Law, Righteousness based on universal human moral and spiritual values which, leads to establishing Truth and Justice of God. Prophets, apostles and enlightened Saints love and fight for this *Dharma*.

Säkä : is not an ordinary event, but a catalytic or earth-shaking event; an event which lives in history as memorable and outstanding.

Sirar : has two meanings; the one which is most plausible is determined conviction of Guru Tegh Bahadur;

the other meaning of *Persian* origin means, secret. The translators tend to explain that Guru Tegh Bahadur refused to give the secret of his inner divine Powers, and the first interpretation is closer to Guru Tegh Bahadur's apostolic character.

Thus Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom was the most important event of the Aurangzeb period. Sufi Saint Sarmad had also suffered martyrdom. But he was a Jew turned Muslim, and a naked *fakir*. And he suffered martyrdom not for his ideology, or for going about naked but for tenderly loving Prince Dara Shikoh and blessing him. Yet he is considered a martyr, because he died for his convictions.

It is the misfortune of the human world that during their life time martyrs are condemned as heretics, seditionists, enemies of the State, rebels and even terrorists, but after their death they emerge on the pages of history with renewed moral power. False historical reconstructions based on highly prejudiced and misleading records are bound to be false and hostile in statements and interpretations. The truth about such great events as the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur cannot remain hidden for long. There may be confused and one side descriptions about historic battles, but martyrdoms of great idealists and heroes shine forth through all dark clouds in history. Well has a Turkish poet said :

"The secret that is hidden in the breast
is not the sermon.

You cannot utter it on the pulpit
but on the gallows.

Emerson says in his essay "*Compensation*" "The martyr cannot be dishonoured. Every lash inflicted is a tongue of flame; every prison a more illustrious abode; every burned book or house enlightens the world; every suppressed or expunged word reverbrates through the earth from side to side. Hours of sanity or consideration are always arriving to communities as to individuals, when the truth is seen and the martyrs are justified."

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MYSTICAL PERCEPTIONS AND HUMAN VALUES IN GURU TEGH BAHADUR'S BĀNĪ : (HYMNS)

DR. TARLOCHAN SINGH

Mysticism is a vast subject, and its concepts and interpretations have differed from age to age and from country to country. Astronomers and Physicists in the early part of this century thought that the knowledge of the world and the universe was in their intellectual grasp. They could explain everything through a few scientific theories. But the advances in astronomy have brought such awe-inspiring immensity of the Universe that the history of all the human civilizations is just a tale

Told of an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing ?

Various religions from the time of tribal creeds to the period of scholastics and born religious geniuses known as saints and prophets have recorded throughout history their intuitional experiences of higher consciousness which pass under the broad term "mysticism." And yet mystical experiences have differed from one mystical philosopher to another and from one saint or prophet to another.

"There is hardly any soil", says Browne, "be it ever so barren, where mysticism will not strike root; hardly any creed, however, formal, round which it will not turn itself. It is, indeed, the eternal cry of the human soul for rest; the insatiable longing of a being wherein infinite ideals are fettered and cramped by a miserable actuality; and so long as man is less than an angel and more than a beast, this cry will not for a moment fail to make itself heard. Wonderfully uniform, too, is its tenor; in all ages, in all centuries, in all creeds, whether it come from the *Brahmin* sage, the *Persian* poet or the Christian quietist, it is in essence an enunciation more or less clear, more or less eloquent, of the

aspiration of the soul to cease altogether from Self and to be at one with God."¹

Mysticism is not a religion in itself, but it is the essence of all higher theistic and non-theistic religions. The mystics of every religion who have experienced inner illumination have always revolted against useless rituals and cold formal activities of their own religion; and in religions in which mysticism finds a secondary place, the mystics have suffered death for their utterances about Truth and God.

Not only religious thinkers but even philosophers like Plato and Plotinus have given expressions to those mystical experiences which we find in higher monotheistic religions like Christianity, Islam and Sikhism.

Plato says, "What may we suppose to be the felicity of the man, who, instead of a man who sees absolute Beauty in its essence, pure and unallayed, who, instead of a beauty tainted by human flesh and colour and a mass of perishable rubbish, is able to apprehend divine Beauty where it exists apart and alone? Do you think that it will be a poor life that a man leads who has his gaze fixed in that direction, who contemplates absolute Beauty with the appropriate faculty and is in constant union with it? Do you not see that in that region alone where he sees Beauty with the faculty capable of seeing it, will be able to bring forth not mere reflected images of Goodness but true Goodness, because he will be in contact not with a reflection but with the truth? And having brought forth and nurtured true goodness he will have the privilege of being beloved of God, and becoming, if ever a man can, immortal himself." ² Elsewhere Plato says, "The perfect life would be a life of perfect communion with other souls, as well as with the Soul which animates the universe." Describing this Beautiful Vision and Union with God, Plotinus says, "Beholding this Being - resting, rapt, in the vision and possession of so lofty a loveliness, growing to its likeness-what Beauty can the soul yet lack? For This, the Beauty supreme, the absolute and the primal, fashions Its lovers to Beauty and makes them also worthy of Love."³

This shows that higher mystical experiences were achieved

not only by those who have lived and grown in certain religious traditions but also in the life and experiences of great philosophers in the Greek and Roman world. Baba Nanak's mystical thoughts come close to these philosophers and some eminent Sufis, and it differs much from a number of mystical schools in Hinduism.

2.1. WHAT SIKH MYSTICISM IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

Sikhism is in its purest essence a mystical religion answering all the spiritual and cultural needs of human beings as individuals and as social groups. But Sikhism firmly rejects what is commonly accepted as mystical doctrines in Hinduism, *Hatha Yoga* and various schools of thought which are now considered part of Hindu religion. Sikhism came on the historical scene when Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism had reached the peaks of higher mysticism in their own traditions. There are countless hymns of the first five Gurus which comment in considerable detail on such mystical schools as *Hatha Yoga*, *Tantric* cults, intellectual interpretations of *Vedantic Pundits*, explaining in considerable detail what they reject and what they accept. Sikhism completely rejects all types of magic mystical exercises and the mystery cults built on these premises. Occult thinkers and practitioners have pervaded Christianity, Islam and Hinduism in many illusive forms, and they have done more harm than good to individuals and Society. *Sramanistic* magic, rope tricks, sex orgies of *Tantric* cults and themes of alchemy are strongly condemned. The *Tantrics* usually encourage sex orgies in which women are chosen for *Mathuna* rites and salvation is alleged to be achieved through sexual union of man and woman. Such practices are considered not only immoral and perverted but even dangerous for individuals and society.

The Sikh Gurus also reject the quasi mystical practices of the "Alchemists, Aghoris, Kapalkas, and such emotional mystical practices of *Radha-Krishna* love as *nritya* (dancing), *viluthita* (rolling on the ground), *gīta* (singing), *krosana* (loud crying), *tanu-motana* (twisting of the body), *humkara* (shouting), *jrambha* (vawning), *svasa-bhuman* (profession of sighs), *lokanapaksita*

(disregard for popular opinion): *lalasrava* (foaming at the mouth), *atta-hasa* (loud laughter), *ghurna* (giddiness), *hikka* (hiccough).⁴ All these rhetorical actions of induced ecstasy or false ecstasy have been strongly criticized by Guru Nanak in *Asa-Ki-Var*.

Hatha-Yoga practices and achievements are strongly criticized. They achieve much in disciplining the body, but they cannot control the passions of the mind beyond the period of their exercises. A classical example is of a *Yogi* named Haridas who was buried alive for forty days in 1837 in the presence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Sir Claude Wade, Dr. Janos Hiniberger and the British Consulate Lahore. When the sealed box which was placed in a sealed pavilion was opened, he came out alive and was normal and active after an hour. It was a rare feat indeed. After a month or so he eloped with a corrupt woman and led an adulterous life. This is what is repeatedly said in Sikh scriptures : *Hatha yogas* can discipline the body and increase mental concentration but it cannot help in controlling the mind and lower passions. Drug induced mysticism is also strongly condemned in *Sikhism*. *Nihangs* and some *Sant Babas* who use opium, hemp leaves (*Bhang*) and other herbal drugs for trance or *samādhi* are not at all respected in Sikh society except by the ignorant and greedy. Such activities of drug addicts have nothing to do either with Sikh religion or mysticism.

The path of Sikhism (*Gurmat mārga*) is fundamentally a mystical path from the Sikh initiation ceremony which has existed in one form or the other since Guru Nanak. Sikh prayer, worship, meditations and activities are inspired by the mysticism of the Word of God. Whoever does not understand the mystical essence of this religion cannot understand any aspect of Sikhism. A Sikh aspires to realize the unfelt natural presence of God in creation by disciplining his mind and soul into a personal relationship with the concealed Presence of the Supreme Being. His consciousness yearns to penetrate the eternal Essence of the Divine within our soul, and through this inner illumination rise to the eternal presence of God.

The sacred writings of the Gurus have revealed all stages of this mystical path and thrown light on all states and they give

responses to this mystical path of all human conditions of mind. A sinner, an ignorant person, a disillusioned and confused mind, an illiterate person, a *Pundit*, a Saint, a child, a young man and an old man, all find their religious, spiritual and mystical path mapped out in the hymns of *Guru Granth*. All must seek refuge in the Presence of God. Everyone must strip the soul of greed, vanity and sensuality and concentrate his energy on beholding the vision of God.

2.2. GURU TEGH BAHADUR'S MYSTICAL APPROACH TO LIFE, SOCIETY AND GOD

The writings of the first five Gurus and the Bhaktas compiled in the *Adi Granth* are a vast and profoundly philosophic and mystical, and for Guru Tegh Bahadur it was the Primal Source of his inspiration. So far as the basic doctrines were concerned he had nothing to add. Whenever he met *Pundits*, scholarly *Yogis* and monks he quoted from the *Adi Granth*. He was, however, living in different situations than the predecessors. During Guru Nanak's life time, his devotee and friend Daulat Khan Lodhi ruled Punjab for nearly 25 years. Babar met Guru Nanak and became his admirer after the first encounter. The third, forth and fifth Guru lived during the reign of Akbar and Jahangir had come to the throne a few months before he entered Punjab.

But Guru Tegh Bahadur was born and brought up in a tense atmosphere of military conflicts and threats from Delhi. He had seen the imprisonment of Shah Jahan, the rise of Aurangzeb and a continuing threat to the peace of the land. People lived in fear always waiting for something terrible to happen.

Out of the eleven years of his Guruship he stayed in Anandpur hardly for three years. He was constantly on the move in Punjab, and in all the states of North India. Like a true prophet he felt concerned not only with his own *Panth*, with his own followers, not only with the people of his own state, but with the poor and down-trodden of all human beings within his reach. To the king of Assam, the Nawab of Dacca and innumerable other princes he met, he came as a Prophet of peace and enlightenment.

He distributed to the people what was offered to him. He was a born poet and mystic. He conveyed the profound message of his predecessors in the simplest language.

During the rule of Aurangzeb when the whole social, cultural and political atmosphere was charged with the sorrow and sadness of repression, lack of many fundamental freedoms, Guru Tegh Bahadur preached the message of Guru Nanak's doctrines in the simplest language, through soul stirring songs which directly reached the hearts of the listeners. No one has to pause and ask "What is the meaning of this hymn?" Their appeal is even today directly to our hearts and our suppressed emotions. And yet *Padavalis* and *Shlokas* throw light on all the aspects of Guru Nanak's doctrines.

We have a tendency of confusing Sikh mystical doctrines with those of Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. Although the goal of all mystical paths, like that of Sikhism is the Self (*Atman*) and God, the basic approach and framework of each religion is different. Christian mysticism and the concept of Satan and Resurrection gives an entirely different framework to Christian mysticism. In Hinduism theoretical and intellectual approach to mysticism has led Vedantists to the concept of the Absolute, but in actual practice they continued to worship *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*, *Ganesha* and *Durga*. In practical religious life Hindu sages have found it difficult if not impossible to get a way from the worship of gods and goddesses, and this included their traditional attachment to idolatry of these gods and goddesses. The worship of *Vishnu*, *Shiva* instead of uniting them divided them. But the Sikhs of all *sampardayas* and shades were put on the path of worship of God through the Word of God.

The God of Christian mysticism is the same as that of other higher religions, but Christian thinkers and contemplatives try to associate the mystic path with the different aspects of the life of Christ. The super-structure thus built is perhaps useful for Christian theological discipline but make it difficult for the non-Christian to grasp it. In Islam the Sufis followed a liberal and very inspiring spiritual path, which is as universal and illuminating as Sikhism; but Sufi movements have been treated

throughout Islamic history as sectarian and heretic development, and it was generally opposed by kings, *Qazis* and *Mullas*. Had not Al-Ghazali used his scholarship and mystical experiences for the re-orientation of Islam as well as Sufism, Islamic mysticism would not have lasted long. Now it is virtually dead.

Guru Nanak founded his religion on such liberal spiritual principles that foreseeing dangers of attacks by orthodox and fanatics he started his career with a vigorous attack on fanatics, dogmatics and hypocrites. In Sikhism there have been fiery and furious fanatics in politics, but the religious, theological and philosophical fields have been absolutely free from such element. This is the reason why Sikh religion, temples and mystics attracted everyone.

It is in this context that Guru Tegh Bahadur's *Padavalis* and *Shlokas* should be seen as inspired outpourings of a prophet addressed to all human hearts. Guru Tegh Bahadur's hymns open with the lines, *re mana* (O my mind), *māi* (Mother, implying our conscience which guides us as a mother guides a child); *Prānī* (living beings), *sādho* (seekers of religious experiences). The verses are written in subjective mood and an inward reflection on Self-examination.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's voice rings through our ears and through the heart of sinners and saints, the hypocrites and the holy, the selfish and greedy, egoists and men of charity and compassion. In every human heart there are diverse passions leading to different paths all going in different directions. Guru Tegh Bahadur's reflective self-examination of every type of sinner and misguided saint directs him to the illumined regions of the soul where God alone exists. Whoever concentrates on Self-examination, experiences change says Muhasibi because "God opens to him the gate of understanding, whereby to advance in faith and to attain to higher station, and strengthens his determination and increases his insight so that he can be a means of leading others also to perfection."⁵

The first hindrance in spiritual life is our attachment to our body, our involvement in our passions. Guru Tegh Bahadur urges us to change the attitude of our "Self" towards our desires

and body passions in order to raise our mind to spiritual consciousness. The plight of a person in moral and spiritual distress is "*Jhùthā tan sächā kar mānyā*" he considers the body to be lasting and truly worth adoration. He does not know that restless and disturbing desires are his constant companions (*chanchal trishnā sang basat hai*). Man listens to the religious sermons advising him to control his mind, but he finds it extremely difficult to control the mind.

People take their life of physical pleasures to such disgraceful limits that they are not ashamed of being mocked at by people for their follies and debaucheries (*lāj na lok hasan kī*)

Ouspensky was of the opinion that most people walk through life as sleep-walkers, unaware of their moral and social responsibility to their own Self and to the society around them. Although their eyes are open, the eyes of their mind, heart and soul are closed. They move about immersed in dreams, their dreams move about their faces like clouds. Guru Tegh Bahadur urges such people to be awake and become conscious of their inner life and its destiny :

Awake O man ! awake and arise !
 Why sleepest thou in reckless indifference,
 The body which was born with thee,
 Will not accompany thee after death;
 Father, mother, sons and friends,
 From whom you have deep attachment,
 Will throw you in the flames,
 As soon as your soul departs.
 People pretend to love thee,
 They feign to be ever thine,
 Only as long as you live in the world,
 Awake ! Arise ! says Nanak : Sing His praise
 Like a dream the earthly life will pass away.

A.G. Tilang, p. 726.

The first step towards the Goal is self-purification. We have to uproot from the soul all violent passions, and extirpate vicious desires and evil intentions. We show attachment to our wife and children and call it love. It is not love but false and selfish attachment (*mamtā*) which is confined only to self-interest. We

have to detach our mind from all these false attachments and establish true human and spiritual relations. Only then can we tread the path of spiritual life.

We have to abandon craze for possession, passion for sensuous pleasures and be detached from riches, evil habits, and even misleading religious observances. All external observances in a religion are means of sincere worship and prayer. Fasts, rituals, external observances do not lead to spiritual enlightenment.

Some external rites and ceremonies and rules of conduct are necessary for every religion by virtue of which acceptance of a man in a faith becomes a fact. He takes some vows before his Master which as a conscientious disciple he will always keep. But the Path is the kernel while the rules of conduct are the shells. Some people make fasts and going to pilgrimage are the means of inward piety and holiness while at heart they are loveless, unkind and irreligious.

What use is going to pilgrimage,
What use are all fasts;
If you take not refuge in the Lord?
Know such *yoga* and worship to be useless
Which neglects praise and love of God.

A. G. Bilawal, p. 83.

Guru Tegh Bahadur repeatedly draws our attention to distracting factors of our life and society which confuse and enchain the mind. Each person is disturbed by different factors and each person must fight his own battle for controlling the mind and achieving inner peace and enlightenment. Before one achieves any inner and outer freedom he must be free from the fetters of the senses, the shackles of desire and from pride, prejudice and egoism of every kind. This moral purification would not be acquired through wasteful penance, and immoderate self mortification. It should be done through interior prayer, sincere devotion to God and contemplation of His Name.

2.3 GURU TEGH BAHADUR'S PERCEPTION OF HUMAN SUFFERING AND HUMAN FREEDOM

There is a 'divine sadness' in the hymns and *shlokas* of Guru

Tegh Bahadur. He reflects on the transience of the world, the impermanence of the body, the bitterness sense-pleasures, and all his works are pervaded with a sense of sorrow and suffering. Yet there is no radical pessimism of the type which we notice in religions having a negative attitude to life. Guru Tegh Bahadur is himself cheerful, poised and dynamic; he feels a deep agony for those who eat, drink, sleep wobbling in wealth and luxury and end up their life as moral wrecks. He does not consider the world wholly ill which must be discarded and renounced. For him the world is not a vale of tears and human life is not an ocean of sorrow and suffering. On the other hand, the world is a beautiful creation of God which has been made ugly by evil and animal passions of human beings. It is possible for human beings to become gods on earth and make this earth a paradise. God ever lives with you (*Sadā basat tum sāth*) all a person has to do to end his agony is to seek Him within himself. The light of God will illumine the inner being of one who discards attachment to wealth and is mentally detached (*udās*) from all material actions.

He who is detached from material possessions,
And gives up egoism and selfishness, says Nanak;
He who is free from craving for all things,
In him dwells the Light of God.

- A.G. Shloka, 18.

It is our obsessions of self-love, greed, sensuous pleasures and a grasping mentality which make our life and society around us full of sorrows and suffering. Misled by blinding pleasures we become creatures of waste land. Like ignorant fools we continue to drink the stupefying wine of delusion and we stand doomed to sorrow and disgraceful end.

Guru Granth mentions another type of sorrow and agony in human life which can be used to chasen us and illumine the dark corners of our deluded souls. Otherwise this very sorrow can crush us mentally and spiritually. Sorrow and joy are a part of life. We have to live with them and transcend them. Just as we have to live with darkness and light, heat and cold, rain and dry weather, we have to live with the sorrows and sufferings for which we are responsible, but this suffering can be transmuted and transcended. Guru Nanak tells us how this can be done in a

number of his verses. One of his well known verses says :

dīvā mera ek nām,
dukh vich pāyā tel
un chānan oh sokhiā
chūkā jam sion mel.
I have lighted my lamp
With the Light of His Name;
And poured into it
The oil of my sorrow and suffering
With the Flame of this Lamp;
The whole oil has been burnt
And I have parted company
With darkness and death.

A.G. Guru Nanak, *Asa*, p. 356

This is the sorrow and suffering the seeds of which a man carries in his own heart and soul. But there is another sorrow and suffering which is caused by the rulers and religious authorities. The sight of this sorrow and suffering was unbearable to Guru Nanak and has given us innumerable verses giving an incisive analysis of this sorrow and suffering, and for it he blames the *Brahmins*, the *Qazis* and the corrupt ministers.

qādi kūrḥ bol mal khāe
brāhmin nhāvae jīa ghāe
jogī jugat nā jāne andh
tino ujārhe kā bandh.

Qazis tell lies in their judgements
The Brahmin slays innocent people
And then bathes in the sacred river.
The Yogi knows not the mystery of the Path
He is morally and spiritually blind.
All three are responsible
For ruining and wrecking society.

A.G. P.662 Guru Nanak, *Dhanasari Ch. 7*

It is this sorrow and suffering caused by an oppressive state authority and by the religious leaders of the Hindus and Muslims which had struck such fear and terror in the hearts of lower castes and classes, and the poor downtrodden masses. They silently suffered and out of dumb fear could not even raise their voice to cry for help to Almighty God because they were made to believe

that God was on the side of the *Brahmin*, the *Qazi* and the king. They were made to believe that the *Brahmin* was given superior birth and the king and *Qazis* were given superior position to exploit and treat the masses as they liked. The rationalization given behind this oppressive machinery is well put by Erich Fromm thus: "I rule over you because I know what is best for you and in your own interest you should follow me without opposition", Or, "I am so wonderful and unique, that I have a right to expect that other people become dependent on me." Another rationalization which often covers the exploiting tendencies is: "I have done so much for what I want." The more aggressive kind of sadistic impulses finds its most frequent rationalization in two forms: "I have been hurt by others and my wish to hurt them is nothing but retaliation" or "By striking first I am defending myself or my friends against the danger of being hurt." ⁶

This type of chilling and crushing fear had existed among masses for centuries and the leaders lacked the will to resist these oppressive forces which ruled in religious and political sphere by striking terror and fear in the hearts of masses.

It is this fear and sorrow and suffering caused in society by the religious and political oppressors which became intolerable to the Sikh Gurus. They asked people to shed fear by taking refuge in the grace and Power of the Almighty and Fearless God and resist cruelty and oppression. Over and above this was fear of death. The priests and the kings pretended to control people's life, destiny and death.

*bhai kähü kau det neh
neh bhai minat än,
Kahu Nanak sun re manä
Gyänī tähi bakhän.*

He who fears no one
Nor strikes fear in anyone
Consider my mind, Nanak says :
Such a man to be Enlightened Sage.

A. G. Shlokas 16

Guru Tegh Bahadur urged the people to conquer fear and conquest of fear gives a person the moral courage to resist evil

and even conquer death. A truly fearless man neither threatens anyone nor is he afraid of anyone. He even conquers the fear of death. Men with dead conscience armed with authority and weapons also pretend to be fearless, but they are actually cowards at heart. Their haughty demeanour striking fear in others springs from callous, and ruthless craze for crime and bloodshed.

A truly fearless man is a God-fearing man of wisdom. He is generous and compassionate and conscious of his inward strength and moral courage which springs from his abiding faith in Truth and Justice. He conquers the hearts of others with compassion, charity and understanding. Guru Tegh Bahadur calls him an enlightened Sage-Scholar (*Gyāni*).

The problems of society which Guru Tegh Bahadur saw before him and we see today could be solved only by people who walked on the Path shown by Guru Nanak and had shed greed, attachment, vanity. He is the true saviour of humanity.

*jo prānī mamtā tājai lobh moh ahamkār
kahu Nānak āpan tarai auran let udhār.*

The man who ceases to say: me, mine and I
And discards attachment, greed and pride
He swims safely across the turbulent sea of life
And saves many others in their struggle and strife.

A. G. Shlokas 22

Greed, pride, selfishness are blind man's vision and weaken his moral health and muscle. If he abandons himself to these temptations he is ship-wrecked and swept away in the ocean of fear and doom. If he discards these temptations and strengthens himself with patience, selflessness, compassion and dedication to truth, he can be a liberated one and he can be a true saviour of humanity. These ideal men, enlightened Sikhs, called *gurmukhs* are able to pull others out of the flood of suffering. There are people who take pleasure in the sorrow and sufferings of others. Such people must be challenged and resisted. Their victims must be saved. People suffer for two reasons : firstly they, day and night, perform evil deeds which lead to suffering which beggars description. Their sins and misdeeds bring a heavy crop of misery.

Apostles like Guru Tegh Bahadur had a divine mission to root out fear from the hearts of the people and he gave this sense of mission to all his enlightened followers. Once a person discards cowardice and mentality of a slave and serf he can win all his freedoms and live like a human being.

2.4. GOD'S RESPONSE TO SEEKERS OF HIS PROTECTION AND GRACE

A man entirely unconcerned with his self is dead; a man exclusively concerned with his own self is a beast. The child becomes human, not by discovering the environment which includes things and other selves, but by becoming sensitive to the interests of other selves. Human is who is concerned with other selves. The concern for others often demands the price of self-denial. How could self-denial or even self-extinction be explained as self-extension? The concern for others is not an extension in breadth but an ascension, a rise. Man reaches a new vertical dimension, the dimension of the holy, when he grows beyond his self-interests, when that which is of interest to others becomes vital to him, and it is only in this dimension, in the understanding of its perennial validity, that the concern for other human beings and the devotion to ideals may reach the degree of self denial." ⁷

Cicero believed: "The gods are careful about great things but neglect small one." The Sikh Gurus were of the opinion that true prophets and true saints devote all their life for serving others on the moral and spiritual plans. For them such a service of humanity is fulfilment of their own destiny and the Will of God who is concerned about the most insignificant. All the Gurus believed that God takes interest in the fate of man; nay he takes interest in the fate of all creatures who remember Him. "God is present in His continuous expression within us and outside us. He is immanent in all beings in the way in which a person is immanent in a cry that he utters. He stands for what he says and does."

In the *Guru Granth* there are historical anecdotes and autobiographical experiences of *Bhaktas* giving vivid details of how God protected and blessed those who remembered in the time

of some personal crises. From *Mahabharata* we have the well known incident of Draupadi where God protected the nakedness of Draupadi when Daryodhana ordered that she should be stripped naked. This is a historical fact. We have incidents from the life of Kabir and Namdev recorded by them as their autobiographical experience in which they have revealed how God intervened and protected them with His own Gracious Hands.

We then have stories from ancient Indian history - the story of Prahlad, Dhruva, Ajamila given in historical portion of *Puranas*. The historical portions of *Puranas* and similar literature of early period is the only source of these historical traditions. These *Puranas* have preserved the historical traditions fairly correctly. Paragteer an authority on Ancient Indian historical traditions says, "There is much traditional history including fairly copious genealogies down to the battle and the death of Krishna and the Pandavas, and then all the genealogies stop short except those of the three great kingdoms of Hastinapur, Ayodhya and Magadha, although the oldest dynasties continued to exist, such as those of Panchala, Kasi Mithla."⁸ Prahlada was a historical figure. He was not an Aryan but a Dravidian. As the Aryans called themselves *acharaya*, *upadhyaya*, *purohita* and *gurus*, *suras*, they addressed the dark-skinned Dravidians *asura* and *daityas*. That is why Prahlad is called a *daitya-putra* even in *Gurbani*. His genealogy is also available.

All these stories are mentioned by almost all Gurus and all major *Bhaktas* to assure the human world that God intervenes in the fate of human beings, kingdoms and civilizations.

Dr, Surjit Hans in his recently published book "*Reconstruction of Sikh History from Sikh Literature*" writes "The first striking thing about the *bānī* of Guru Tegh Bahadur is its extreme simplicity. There is no obscurity in his descriptions. His simplicity can be seen from the fact that he repeatedly refers to a few mythological stories. It is as if he were driving the point home to the audience by telling them stories when they appeared not to grasp it. Story appeals to a comparatively lower intellectual level. Guru Tegh Bahadur's compositions have the simplicity of minimum appeal. It seems as if he were speaking to the few and

the newly initiated. This is not the time to address the veteran Sikhs. It is the time of one speaking of elementary spiritual mysteries to the experts. If they are compared with the readers of the *Vars* of Bhai Gurdas the impression is confirmed that Guru Tegh Bahadur had very tenuous connections with the congregations around Amritsar and Kartarpur, and his Sikhs belonged to still nondescript classes." ⁹

Dr. Surjit Hans extends his Marxist logic of dialectic materialism to ridiculous length and draws conclusions from his imaginary pre-supposition of history which are a mockery to rational historical analysis or investigations and are purely based on his innovative fantasy which he calls historical investigations and reconstruction. He might have received a wide acclaim for his methodology and findings from the Marxist world of Europe but only recently this world has collapsed like a wall of sand and the whole world knows how much damage Marxism has done to the literature, culture and civilizations of this part of Europe.

The following are the historical situations and ideas called out by Dr. Surjit Hans out of the *hymns* and *Shlokas* of Guru Tegh Bahadur :

1. In spite of the fact that tremendous intellectual activities had taken place in Goindwal and then Amritsar where Guru Arjan compiled the *Adi Granth*, the people of *Majha* and areas around Kartarpur remained intellectually and spiritually backward.
2. Each Guru addressed his followers according to their class-consciousness and it was Guru Tegh Bahadur's misfortune that he did not produce any religious literature worth the appreciation of Veteran Sikhs.
3. The use of simple language and popular stories indicates that it was meant for the unsophisticated and semi-literate masses and not for the learned scholars and Pundits like Surjit Hans, the class we now find in our universities.
4. Bhai Gurdas' *Vars* were also meant for popular unsophisticated masses, and perhaps from Marxist point of view a brilliant intellectual like Surjit Hans does not find any philosophic, metaphysical or mystical doctrines. For the sophisticated veteran Sikhs even the hundreds of verses of Bhai Gurdas are simple, unsophisticated and not worth the

attention of sophisticated intellectuals like Surjit Hans. These stories are mythical nonsensical fables to atheists, Marxists and agnostics; but to the believer and to the Gurus who related them, they were epoch-making events revealing that God is concerned with the fate of man and God does protect those who seek refuge in Him.

These stories and similar stories are used by almost all Gurus and many *Bhaktas* who did not write in so simple language as Guru Tegh Bahadur writes. Guru Gobind Singh wrote in *Sanskritized Braj Bhasha* and yet the recurrent theme of his works is that God protects the down-trodden and destitute (*dinan kī pratipāl kare*) and he shields all saints who seek His protection. Guru Gobind Singh goes a step further. He says God hears even the stifled cries of such insignificant creatures as an ant:

*hāthī kī chinghār pal pāchhe pahunchat tāhi,
chitī kī pukār pehle hī sunyat hai*

The trumpeting call of the elephant,
May take some time to reach God
But the silent cry of the ant
Reaches His ears far ahead.

Guru Gobind Singh : *Akal Ustat*. 256.

2.5. THE HIGHEST MYSTICAL STATE AND UNION WITH GOD

Sikhism is a path (*mārga*) shown by the Guru and it can be traversed by all human beings who live according to the Wisdom of the Guru (*gurmat*). The path has its stages of self-purification, contemplation and spiritual life which leads by stages to the Ultimate Goal of liberation. The highest spiritual stage is achieved by illumined souls who were called *Gurmukh* by Guru Nanak, *Brahm-Gyāni* by Guru Arjan Dev and "*Khalsa*" by Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Tegh Bahadur uses the word "*Gurmukh*" for those who achieve the highest spiritual state called *Nirvāna*, *Nirbān Pada* or *Pūran Pada*, *Abhai Pada*. In this state he becomes a whole man and a complete personality. He attains the sublime heights of divinity. A patient contemplative life, led according to the moral code and spiritual discipline imparted by the Guru, the spirit of a true seeker achieves perfect illumination.

The Light of God penetrates the whole being of the devotee. All his animal passions are sublimated and he becomes a divine man liberated from his lower self and disturbing attachments. His consciousness is illumined. He emerges out of the cave of illusion, enters the transcendental world. His mind has travelled a long path leaving behind him all the lower states of consciousness which were obsessed by desire, possessive instincts and vanity. He becomes a true Saint, a Saint who does not have to wear holy robes to display his spiritual status. He is judged by his deeds. He lives not for his own comforts but spends every moment for serving the people in the name of God.

In the history of India Sikh apostles and Saints have been the first proclaimers of humanitarian ideals, the first fighters for social justice for all, the first fighters for economic equality and freedom of worship of all, and the first champions of the depressed classes and lower castes. They have been the first liberators of bonded labourers and serfdom of all types. They have been the first to establish the sanctity of labour and they have been the first to show the same reverence to saints and seers of all religions which they show to their own saints. They move about as religious and spiritual counsellors who impart moral and spiritual instructions to others without the least desire to convert them. Sikh Saints have always fought for the type of Universal culture which the wisest men in the world are trying to achieve. It is Sikh doctrines and religious disciplines that gave them such tremendous moral, spiritual and creative powers. This is how Guru Tegh Bahadur described a truly enlightened Sage:

That man has understood the essence of Existence,
 Who in happiness and suffering,
 Remains posed with equanimity
 Who in glory and shame,
 Feels just the same;
 Who is detached from joy;
 As well from sorrow and pain;
 Who cares not for praise,
 Nor even for blame,
 But seeks the state of Nirvāṇa
 Says Nanak : it is an arduous game

Which few divine Sages comprehend.

Guru Tegh Bahadur calls these sages "*Gurmukh*" one whose face, mentally and spiritually is always turned towards the light of God. A *Gurmukh* is strong, self-poised in self-control; he takes pain and pleasure, heat and cold, glory and humiliation alike. With his mind free from all dark forces, his senses sublimated, he lives in the joy of inner illumination and knowledge of Truth, Tranquil in Spirit, free from all fear, the greatest grief does not disturb his inner peace. He is stainless, serene, well-balanced and unperplexed, with his mind ever fixed on the love of God.

He who grieves not in grief,
From avarice, pleasures and fear is free,
And considers gold as good as dust;
Who indulges not in slander or flattery,
And is immune to greed, attachment and vanity,
Who in happiness and sorrow, self-posed remains,
And is immune to greed, attachment and vanity,
Who discards all hopes and desires,
Who lives detached from the world,
And is not affected by lust and wrath,
In such a one shines the Light of God.
The man who receives the Guru's grace
Discovers the secret of spiritual life,
Sayeth Nanak, the soul of such a man blends
With God, as water mingles with water.

A.G. Sorath, p. 633.

The *Gurmukh*, the Sage-Mystic, the illumined Sikh Saint is distinguished by his self-control, fixity of purpose and cheerfulness in misfortune. His character is admirable combination of dignity and charm, and he performs all duties of his station quietly and without fuss. He gives everyone the conviction that he speaks as he believes; and acts as he judges right with his refined moral and spiritual perceptions. He is never hasty and never dilatory or evasive. He indulges neither in despondency nor forced gaiety, nor has anger and jealousy and power over him. His kindness, sympathy and sincerity all contribute to give the impression of rectitude that is innate and calculated.

The darkness of error in an illumined Sikh is dispelled by the

light of Truth and strengthens him in life and death. He loves Truth, he loves God intensely and the love of God descends on him as abiding Grace and Light which shines in his heart. He attains inseparable union with God.

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GURU NANAK AND INDIAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

MADANJIT KAUR

3.1 In the *Bāṇī* of Guru Nanak there is very little appreciation for any particular form of religious belief and practice, whether Hindu or Muslim. The cultural and social context in which Guru Nanak (A.D.1469-1539) had to operate was predominantly Hindu. It is clearly evident from the hymns of Guru Nanak that he addressed to the Hindus who were ill-acquainted with the essence of their scriptures¹ and that Hinduism had declined to meaningless rituals, customs and hypocritical beliefs.² The *Nath* and *Kanphata Yogis* form another important sector of the audience of Guru Nanak.³ The Guru criticized them as hypocrites, who were a negative influence on the common man and the society in which they lived.⁴ However, positive appreciation is reserved for *Nirgun Bhakti*.

It is equally evident from the *Bāṇī* of Guru Nanak that Islam too as a religion was not fulfilling its obligatory social function. Guru Nanak confronted his Muslim audience through their own traditions. As in the case of *Pandits* of Hinduism, so the representatives of Islam i.e., the *qazis* and *mullahs* are criticized for their failure to live according to the requirements they may lay down for others.⁵ Addressing Muslim audience Guru Nanak sought to guide them along the same path of a universal morality that he indicated to the followers of Hinduism. His dispensation for the Muslims are contained particularly in '*Var- Majh*'.⁶ A close association of Guru Nanak's *bhakti* with the *Sant* tradition, negates the hypothesis of a direct Muslim influence upon his ideals, as well as the notion of Sikhism as a deliberate attempt to produce a synthesis of Hinduism and Islam. The Guru is not to be seen as a synthesizer of faiths but as a holyman who reinterpreted his inheritance and made a significant contribution

to the cultural heritage of India. Rising to a higher plane, he declared the apparent divergencies of creed, particularly between Hinduism and Islam as two paths to be one.⁷

3.2 Hinduism is not a unified and integrated religious system. It is a grouping together of cults and creeds that are at times quite at variance in their doctrines and fundamental concerns. Religions of Vedic origin are iconographic, introspective and mystical. By this test Sikhism, being a non-idolatrous, prophetic and revelatory religion essentially imbibes the characteristics that distinguish its independent identity. And thus by implication Sikhism is a non-Hindu religion.⁸

The central affirmation of the faith of Guru Nanak is that : God is one without a second⁹ and God is acting a free agent (*Karta Purakh*), the Creator of the cosmos¹⁰ of which man is only one part. This theology has far reaching consequences. The consequences of the experience of Ultimate Reality as 'One' and 'self-disclosing' was that Guru Nanak denounced as false all those forms of religious traditions which denied the unity of God, and the systems which encouraged man to observe rituals, austerities, penance and sufferings for the sake of salvation. Jainism for its rejection of belief in God as well as its neglect of social responsibilities was condemned outright.¹¹ In fact the attitude of Guru Nanak towards the Jain highlights the social and theistic emphasis of his theology.¹²

For the rejection of exterior forms and rituals but their affirmation of unity and mystical union with God, the *Nath* beliefs certainly exercised an influence. We find an extensive use of *Nath* terminology in the *Bāṇī* of Guru Nanak.¹³ Nevertheless, the *Nath Yogis* fared only little better than their contemporaries.¹⁴ Their inclination towards sectarian strife, withdrawal from life, dependency on public charity together with their belief that liberation could be achieved only by effort and suffering meant that Guru Nanak had to reject their path as a way of futility even though he regarded their description of the ultimate goal (mystical union with God) as valid. Guru Nanak explicitly rejected *Nath* methods and beliefs and his *Bāṇī* bears clear evidence of an open controversy with *Nath Yogis*.¹⁵

An important aspect of the teachings of Guru Nanak is the examination and evaluation of the *Yogic* system prevalent in contemporary India.¹⁶ Guru Nanak found the *Yogic* cults very widespread and popular. In fact the *Yogic* cult was a dominating influence on the spiritual life of the Hindu Society. The Bānī of Guru Nanak marks out a clear disapproval of the *Yogic* practices and withdrawal from the world. Like Kabir, he called attention to the fact that claiming miraculous power of *Yoga*, they were following only worldly pursuit (*māyā*). The putative spiritual attainment was truly achieved by *Sahaj* and beneficent action.¹⁷

Guru Nanak rejected *parāṇayam* and *Hatha* and severely condemned *Shaktism*.¹⁸ The *Yogic* practices involving occult rites and miracles are rejected. Instead he commanded the centring of the spiritual life in beneficent action in Society.¹⁹

It is evident from his Bānī that *Yoga* was familiar to the masses, that Guru Nanak had to make use of *Yogic* terminology in explaining his theology. The terms *Sahaj*, *Mahāras*, *Mahāanand*, *Dasam Duār*, *Riddhi*, *Siddhi* and *Anhad Sabada* are employed as symbols of ethico-spiritual attainments (*Japuji*). The term *Rāj-Yoga* occurs in *Swaiyya* 6 of Kala Bhatt, in context of Guru Nanak. But here *Rāj-yoga*, is an equivalent to the Guru's enlightenment, his complete victory over the carnal and his attainment of God. The term *Rāj Yoga* here does not imply any form of *Yoga*. *Nathism* and the faith of Nanak present opposite world-views :

The fundamental difference is that *Nathism* rejects the world and life as *maya* and misery. But *Sikhism* accepts them as spiritually meaningful. In *Nathism* withdrawal from the world, asceticism, celibacy, the rejection and downgrading of women, renunciation, solitude, *yogic* methodology are essential. In *Sikhism*, God being attributive, virtuous participation in the world, accepting the house-holder's life and social responsibilities, respect for women and service of man in all spheres of life is necessary. There is hardly a meeting ground between the two systems.²⁰

The ideal life commended by Guru Nanak is that of the house-holder (*grihasthi*) engaged in beneficent activity, keeping his mind absorbed in contemplation and devotion. The synthesis

of the spiritual and the secular is meant to reject the monastic or ascetic kind of life. The various brands of mendicancy in contemporary India such as *Yogis*, *Bairagi*, *Avadhut*, *Siddha* are disapproved as their way of life is barren, cut off from the stream of humanity.²¹

In *Siddha Gost* (dialogues with the *Siddhas*) Guru Nanak has emphasised the void in the spiritual experience of the ascetics.²² Further, '*Ramkali-ki-Var*' gives a detailed exposition of Guru Nanak's view on the prevalent forms of asceticism and mendicancy to bring out the barren, negative features of their practices which benefit no one in society.²³

The conception of true detachment in the theology of Guru Nanak is not of one, who observes the outer symbols of an ascetic or mendicant orders but of a person who keeps his ego under restraint, one who sublimates his desires and seeks the truth.²⁴

It was the *Sant* tradition (*nirgun sampradāy*) which provided the basis of Guru Nanak's thought.²⁵ However, there is an impact of Guru Nanak's originality upon the inheritance, he received. The *bhakti path* of *Sant Parampara* was not a simple way of attaining liberation but was involved in complex and difficult methods. Guru Nanak received the *Sant* synthesis but to expand and reinterpret these ideas in an integrated manner in his theology.²⁷ This tells on his description of the nature of mystic experience (manner of divine communication with man) with concepts like *Śabad*, the *Nām*, the *Guru* and the *Hukam*.

Although one of the significant influence upon the thought of Guru Nanak has been *Bhakti*, but the cults of *Vaishnava Bhakti*²⁸ and *Shaiva Bhakti* did not escape his criticism.

The social implications of the *Vaishnava* and *Shaiva* cults are among the more debated subjects of the contemporary Indian religious traditions. In fact the *Vaishnava* and *Shaiva Bhakti* traditions are part of the general process of social-hang in which the four class system of Hindu society exists as inflexible and hierarchical institutional structure. Guru Nanak wanted for a more flexible multi-centered mode of social organisation based more on voluntary association than on rigid social stratification. Moreover, religious systems that are ascetic or monastic have

generally a harsh attitude towards women. Their world-view involves a virtual withdrawal from social life and they are never bothered about bringing any social change.²⁹

The fundamentals of the *Vaishnava*, *Shaiva* and even *Krishna* cult (i.e., acceptance of religious authority of the *Vedic* scripture, belief in *avatar*, *varan*, rituals etc.) were basically a part and parcel of the *Brahminical* tradition. In addition, they had faith in mystic potency of the *mantras* (sacred formulas) and their *bhakti* was essentially formal and ritualistic without it ever fructifying into efficacious deeds in the social field.³⁰ Guru Nanak clearly denies the scriptural authority of *Vedas*,³¹ and is critical of the caste distinction and rejects the belief in *avatar*.³² He emphasised virtuous deeds to seek the grace of God. All deeds done must find retribution. From this law there is no escape.³³ According to Guru Nanak it is virtuous deeds that are the essence of spiritual life.

In response to the spiritual claims of the *Vaishnava* and the *Shaiva* cults, Guru Nanak asserted that the Supreme Reality lay beyond the garbs and forms of sectarianism and sacred *mantras*. All formal rituals, customs, ceremonies, taboos and austerities are denigrated as they lead the self away from loving devotion (*bhakti*). The consequence of Hindu philosophy of *dvait* (duality), Guru Nanak saw as the worst of all evils.³⁴ From an acceptance of duality all other faults arose i.e., belief in polytheism, self-sufficiency (*haumai*), transmigration, asceticism and indulgence in ritualism etc.

There is an obvious contrast between the *Brahmanic bhakti* traditions and Sikhism in all the essentials. While Sikhism is strictly theistic, the Hindu *bhakti* traditions are pantheistic. The world-view of the religion of Guru Nanak is life affirming and ethical but the one of the *Brahmanic* tradition involves a virtual withdrawal from the world. Besides, their basic difference lies in the value system prescribed by Guru Nanak. Instead of giving importance to pilgrimage, renunciation and meditation in seclusion the Guru laid emphasis on humanitarianism with its constituents of charity, compassion and forgiveness which are essential aspects of true religion.³⁵

'*Bhakti*' (devotion) is the path above all commended by Guru Nanak for realization of God. Learning and intellectual feats are discountenanced since they are source of disputation.³⁶ Like *Gita* the essence of Guru Nanak's *bhakti* lies in the quest for the divine humility, self dedication and complete self-surrender to the mercy and grace of the Supreme Being.³⁷ In the hymns of Guru Nanak the true *bhakti* is the path of dedication to high ideals.³⁸ The devotee must be perfect in his devotion and engaged in holy beneficent action.

The path commended by the Guru harmoniously integrates asceticism and involvement in the world. This is a noble ethical synthesis in which the seeker while fixing his gaze on the Ultimate, the Absolute, at the same time looks upon the sphere of duty in the world as real, and calling for his earnest endeavour to do good and to bring good to others.³⁹

All this stands contrary to the extreme *Vedantic* belief that the phenomenal world is false and illusion (*mithaya/māyā*). But the scheme of life commended by Guru Nanak is not the way of recluse but that of the devoted unassuming man of action.⁴⁰ Man is to be engaged in action that may further God's plan of righteousness in the world. The path of *bhakti* may make a call for sacrifice and martyrdom.

3.3 Many elements in the thought of Guru Nanak have affinity with *Sufi* concepts which suggest Muslim influence. But the apparent similarity is misleading. No doubt :

Islam with its strong emphasis on unity of God, its casteless view of society and its belief that it was through family life and social responsibility that man served God, might have expected to be commended by Guru Nanak, but formalism of Indian Islam earned his disapproval.⁴²

In fact Guru Nanak explicitly rejected the version of Islam he came into contact. There are occasional references to such contacts in his *Bāṇī*.

The attempts to trace Muslim influence in Guru Nanak's teachings have usually been made by those who were themselves ignorant of various strands in Hindu religious thought or who were sometimes consciously serving the cause of Hindu-Muslim

unity by their manipulative efforts at misreading history. It is neither necessary nor feasible to try to discover Muslim influence in Guru Nanak's pattern of teaching. That he was aware of current Muslim thought is without doubt. That some of his admonitions are addressed to Muslims must be taken into consideration. But his teachings show at the most only a marginal influence of *Sufism*, encouraging certain development but in no case providing the actual source of the new innovations, introduced by him. Almost all evident affinities with Islam found in the theology of Guru Nanak can be traced back to native Indian traditions.⁴³ Besides, there is a conspicuous lack of *Sufi* terminology in the religious thought of Guru Nanak. The use of *Persian* terms common among *Sufis* (used by Guru Nanak) indicate no *Sufi* influence, but rather, Guru Nanak's proficiency in the *Persian* language. In choosing Names of God his preference is strongly for *Puärnic* names and when dealing with the concept which has obvious affinities with *Sufi* beliefs he will preferably use a non-*Sufi* term. Moreover, some of the fundamental aspects of Guru Nanak's doctrines like his acceptance of *Karma*, belief in transmigration of soul are in direct conflict with Islam. Further his belief in the need to destroy *mâyä* through *nām simran* does not correspond to the *Sufi* technique of *dhikr* and the concept of five *khands* (realism of '*Japuji*') do not go along even remotely with the *muqāmāt* of *Sufis*.⁴⁴ The emphasis of Guru Nanak on the importance of Guru and union with God could have cut no ice with contemporary Muslims and were never addressed to them. May be, Guru Nanak visited Baba Farid's successor at Pak Patan, but no dialogues with *Sufis* are recorded in his *Bānī* as one with the *Siddhas* and *Yogis* (*Siddh Gost*). It seems, such an inter-faith dialogue with the Muslims could not have been possible in that age.

No doubt Islam through *Sufism* provided a strong encouragement in strengthening monotheistic tendencies and belief in the omnipresence of God. But the monotheism of Guru Nanak is an independent concept and must be regarded primarily as an inheritance from *bhakti* tradition rather than an influence of Islam. Therefore, the impact of Muslim influence upon the

thought of Guru Nanak must accordingly be regarded as relatively slight.⁴⁵ However, this observation should not be pressed to total rejection of the impact of Islam on the thought of Guru Nanak. The *Sant* traditions had already absorbed a certain measure of Islamic influence. Most of the elements in Guru Nanak which suggest Muslim influence evidently reached him through *Sant* tradition. Therefore, the influence of Islam on Guru Nanak was received through 'cultural fusion', it was limited and it had no fundamental significance in his theology.

It is equally important to study Guru's attitude to Hinduism or Islam. It would be wrong to make a generalised statement and say that Guru Nanak regarded Hinduism or Islam as either true or false. Such stereotyped view of the major contemporary religious systems is too doubtful to be held by the Great Guru.⁴⁶ He did not doubt their sacred texts but he condemned the use to which these were being put. Yet he stops short of declaring these as eternal. On the evidence of his *Bāṇī* the conclusion must be reached that Guru Nanak rarely expressed an attitude towards Hinduism or Islam as such. Normally he viewed them in a general, comprehensive way. His comments are usually directed at particular aspects, more often of practice than of belief.⁴⁷ He did not consider them to be fundamentally right or fundamentally wrong but to be composed of variety of religious elements, some pointing to truth, many away from it.⁴⁸

Guru Nanak proclaimed the unity of God and refused to recognise that Hindus and Muslims were fundamentally different. For example, Guru Nanak's first words after his enlightenment were '*Na Hindu Na Musalman*' (there is no Hindu, no Musalman). The true intent and meaning of what Guru Nanak uttered on the occasion of his mystic experience has plausible answers :

Whether he meant that deep down in the substratum of Aryan and Semitic religions there is an identity of base or whether he intended to convey that the truth of both had been obscured and lost to their practitioners on account of verbal formularies and empty rituals, it was a fit formula for the commencement of his divine mission that demands acceptance of genuine dialogue rather than formal conversion

as the goal of transcending particularism of condemning cultures and fending religions.⁴⁹

3.4 The aim of the Guru seemed to discover a universal concept, not syncretic amalgam, but deeper penetration of universal spiritualism.⁵⁰ All great truths were, for him, the property of human race and not restricted to a particular faith. He aspired for a universal religion.⁵¹ In his view, to attain the truth, it was necessary to be more than a Hindu or a Muslim, one must possess direct knowledge of God through His Grace. The real religion is not in symbols, forms or dogmas, it lies in the experience, the soul, and its union with the Supreme Reality.⁵² The Guru made concrete efforts to free the faith from cultural restrictions, seeking to liberate truth from constraints which had obscured it.

Guru Nanak's message was universal in the sense that his attack on certain evils of the day made no distinction and spared the outward symbols of neither Hindus nor Muslims. He appealed to the man underneath a Hindu or a Muslim. But he made no attempt at uniting Hinduism and Islam of his days.⁵³ He had no intention or inclination for such a pedestrian programme.

An objective study of Guru Nanak's beliefs and teachings would amply demonstrate that his message was mainly addressed to Hindus of his days and took the Hindu background of thought and philosophy for granted of course with the originality of the pattern of thought, evolved by him.

Guru Nanak laid the foundation of a liberal theology within the protestant framework. Not only the obligation of doctrinal orthodoxy has been abandoned but also every fixed position i.e., rituals, rites, sacraments, customs and ceremonies, *Varan* and *Jāti* and even adherence to classical languages has become open to question in the process of making sense out of man and his situation. This ideology has a universal appeal. Even the communicative devices of Guru Nanak's teachings with emotional orientation (*Rāgas*) have an inherent quality of universal appeal. The religion of Guru Nanak can freely enter into inter-faith dialogues and cooperation with any religious tradition, which is based on ethical monotheism, humanism and universal spiritualism.

REFERENCES

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ਬਾਣੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬੇਦੁ ਅਥਰਬਣੁ ਕਰਣੀ ਕੀਰਤ ਲਹਿਆ ॥

... ..

ਕਲਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ਕਤੇਬ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥ ਪੋਥੀ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਰਹੇ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਉ ਭਇਆ ਰਹਮਾਣੁ ॥

(The *qāzīs* administer a new law, the *shariat*, *kaliyuga* forces the acceptance of semitic books and *Qurān*. The *Purāns* and *Brahminical* scriptures have gone down. God has changed into *Rehman*).

- *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 903

2. ਗੁਰੂ ਬਿਰਾਹਮਣ ਕਉ ਕਰੁ ਲਾਵਹੁ ਗੋਬਰਿ ਤਰਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

ਧੋਤੀ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੇ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ ਧਾਨੁ ਮਲੇਛਾ ਖਾਈ ॥

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਪੂਜਾ ਪੜਹਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਤੁਰਕਾ ਭਾਈ ॥

ਛੋਡੀਲੇ ਪਾਖੰਡਾ ॥ ਨਾਮਿ ਲਇਐ ਜਾਹਿ ਤਰੇਦਾ ॥

(A Hindu helps the state in collecting taxes on cows and *Brahmins* and incongruously believes that plastering the floor with cowdung would lead to his redemption. Despite his *dhoti*, a mark on his forehead and his rosary he lives on gifts from the Muslims. He worships secretly, but in public he flaunts his smatterings of the ruling class culture. It is time to get rid of elaborate hypocrisy).

Ibid, p. 471

Also :

ਮਾਣਸਖਾਣੇ ਕਰਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜ ॥ ਛੁਰੀ ਵਗਾਇਨਿ ਤਿਨ ਗਲਿ ਤਾਗ ॥

ਤਿਨ ਘਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਪੂਰਹਿ ਨਾਦ ॥ ਉਨਾ ਭਿ ਆਵਹਿ ਓਈ ਸਾਦ ॥

ਕੂੜੀ ਰਾਸਿ ਕੂੜਾ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ ॥ ਕੁੜੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਆਹਾਰੁ ॥

ਸਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਕਾ ਡੇਰਾ ਦੂਰਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੂੜੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ॥

ਮਥੇ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੇਜ਼ਿ ਧੋਤੀ ਕਖਾਈ ॥ ਹਥਿ ਛੁਰੀ ਜਗਤ ਕਾਸਾਈ ॥

ਨੀਲ ਵਸਤ੍ਰ ਪਹਿਰਿ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ॥ ਮਲੇਛ ਧਾਨੁ ਲੇ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ ॥

ਅਭਾਖਿਆ ਕਾ ਕੁਠਾ ਬਕਰਾ ਖਾਣਾ ॥ ਚਉਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ॥

ਦੇ ਕੇ ਚਓਕਾ ਕਢੀ ਕਾਰ ॥ ਉਪਰਿ ਆਇ ਬੈਠੇ ਕੂੜਿਆਰ ॥

ਮਤੁ ਭਿਟੈ ਵੇ ਮਤੁ ਭਿਟੈ ॥ ਇਹੁ ਅੰਨੁ ਅਸਾਡਾ ਫਿਟੈ ॥

ਤਨਿ ਫਿਟੈ ਫੇੜ ਕਰੇਨਿ ॥ ਮਨਿ ਜੂਠੇ ਚੁਲੀ ਭਰੇਨਿ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਈਐ ॥ ਸੁਚਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਤਾ ਸਚੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥

(The corrupt *qāzī* and the Muslim rulers behave like cannibals. The *Khatrī* functionaries under them who wear the sacred thread, wield knives

on the necks of the subjects. The *brāhmins* ritually sound conchshells in the homes of the *khatrijs*. They partake of the ill-gotten gifts too. They live off falsehood. *Dharma* and sense of honour have taken to wings. Falsity is reigning supreme. The *khatri* wears a mark on forehead and a raddish *dhoti*, but wields the knife to butcher the subject classes. He present himself before the Muslim in blue clothes. He pretends to venerate the *purānas* but he works for men who are called *malechh*. He eats *halal* meat, but he would ritually mark his place of unclean. These unclean trunks of men are putting on acts. They wash their mouths, yet their mind remains unclean.)

Ibid., pp. 471-72.

3. See, *Sidh Gost, Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 938-46.

4. There are various hymns of Guru Nanak in which the ways and ideals of the *Nāths* have been denounced and the right ways and approach indicated.

See Ibid, pp. 4, 343, 418, 730, 886, 939, 955, 972-73, 1245.

5. See *Guru Granth Sahib* pp. 24, 141, 466, 662, 721, 903, 951, 956, 966 and 1245. The essence of a true Mussalman has been described by the Guru as :

ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵਣੁ ਮੁਸਕਲੁ ਜਾ ਹੋਇ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ॥
ਅਵਲਿ ਅਉਲਿ ਦੀਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਿਠਾ ਮਸਕਲ ਮਾਨਾ ਮਾਲੁ ਮੁਸਾਵੈ॥
ਹੋਇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮੁ ਦੀਨ ਮੁਹਾਣੈ ਮਰਣ ਜੀਵਣ ਕਾ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਵੈ॥
ਰਬ ਕੀ ਰਜਾਇ ਮਨੇ ਸਿਰ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਮਨੇ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਵੈ॥
ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਆ ਮਿਹਰੰਮਤਿ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ॥

(Hard it is to become a true Muslim;
only one truly such way be so called;
His first action, to love the way of the holy;
Second, to shed off his heart's filth as on the grindstone.
One professing to be guide to Muslim must shed the
illusion of life and death.
To God's Will must he submit;
Obey God and efface his self.
Such a one shall be a blessing for all,
And be truly reckoned a Muslim).

Ibid, p. 141

Also :

ਮਿਹਰ ਮਸੀਤਿ ਸਿਦਕੁ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਹਕੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਭੁਰਾਣੁ॥
ਸਰਮ ਸੁੰਨਤਿ ਸੀਲੁ ਰੋਜਾ ਹੋਹੁ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ॥
ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਬਾ ਸਚੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਕਲਮਾ ਕਰਮ ਨਿਵਾਜ॥
ਤਸਬੀ ਸਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵਸੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਖੈ ਲਾਜ॥ 2॥
ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ॥
ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਹਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ਨ ਖਾਇ॥
ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ॥

ਮਾਰਣ ਪਾਹਿ ਹਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਗਲੀ ਕੂੜੀਈ ਕੂੜੇ ਪਲੈ ਪਾਇ ॥੨॥
 ਪੰਜਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਵਖਤ ਪੰਜਿ ਪੰਜਾ ਪੰਜੇ ਨਾਉ॥
 ਪਹਿਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਹਲਾਲ ਦੁਇ ਤੀਜਾ ਖੈਰ ਖੁਦਾਇ॥
 ਚਉਥੀ ਨੀਅਤਿ ਰਾਸਿ ਮਨੁ ਪੰਜਵੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਨਾਇ॥
 ਕਰਣੀ ਕਲਮਾ ਆਖਿ ਕੈ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਸਦਾਇ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਜੇਤੇ ਕੂੜਿਆਰ ਕੂੜੇ ਕੂੜੀ ਪਾਇ ॥੨॥

(Make the mosque of love of humanity
 Thy Prayer-carpet of sincerity;
 Thy *Quran* of honest and approved endeavour;
 Thy circumcision of modesty;
 Thy *Ramazān* fast of noble conduct;
 Thus shalt thou be a true Muslim.
 Make good deeds thy *Kabā*;
 Truthfulness thy preceptor;
 Thy *namāz* and *kalimā* pure actions;
 Thy rosary what pleases God-
 Thus wilt thou be honoured at the last reckoning.
 Five are the prayers, five the hours to perform them,
 Five their different names;
 What are the true prayers?
 The first is truthfulness, the second honest endeavour;
 The third prayer offered to God for good of all;
 The fourth is a sincere heart;
 The fifth, Divine laudation;
 One whose *kalimā* is good actions, is alone a true Muslim.
 Saith Nanak ; All who are false within, in the end prove of no worth).

Ibid, pp. 140-41.

6. Gurbachan Singh Talib, 'Guru Nanak and National Integration', in *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. XI, No. I, Feb., 1984, p.9.

7. ਰਾਹ ਦੋਵੇ ਇਕੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ਸਿਝਸੀ॥
 ਕੁਫਰ ਗੋਅ ਕੁਫਰਾਣੈ ਪਇਆ ਦਝਸੀ॥
 ਸਭ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੁਬਹਾਨੁ ਸਚਿ ਸਮਾਈਐ॥
 ਸਿਝੇ ਦਰਿ ਦੀਵਾਨਿ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਈਐ॥

He who knows the two paths to be one,
 Shall alone find fulfilment.
 One who repudiates this faith must burn in hellfire.
 The whole universe is Divine in essence.
 Merge yourself into Truth. - *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 142

8. Kapur Singh, *Parasharaprasna*, (First Edition Hind Publishers Ltd. Jullundhar 1959), Revised Edition, Eds, Piar Singh and Madanjit Kaur,

GNDU, Amritsar, 1988, Introduction.

9. It is a characteristic expression of Guru Nanak which recurs many times in his *Bāṇī*. In the beginning of the *Mūl Mantra* stands the figure 1 and Sikh tradition is unanimous in accepting 'Ek Onkar' as a declaration of unity of God. This concept of unity of God is strongly emphasised in the hymns of Guru Nanak. In the very opening lines of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Ultimate Reality is explicitly described by the Guru as :

ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

(He is the Sole Supreme Being; of eternal manifestation; Creator, Immanent Reality; Without Fear; Without Rancour; Timeless; Formless; Unincarnated; Self-Existent; Realized by grace of the holy Preceptor).

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1

Again :

ਛਿਅ ਘਰ ਛਿਅ ਗੁਰ ਛਿਅ ਉਪਦੇਸ ॥
ਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਏਕੋ ਵੇਸ ਅਨੇਕ ॥

(There are six systems of philosophy (Indian), six *gurūs*, and six patterns of instruction, but the *Guru* of these *gurūs* is one though, His manifestation be many).

Ibid, p. 357

10. ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸ ਇਕ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਆਪੇ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਾਰੀ ॥

(The Lord is manifest in the three worlds. He is the Eternal Giver and there is no other).

Ibid, p. 908

Again :

ਕਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਤੂ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਣੁ ॥

(My Master is one,

He is the one.

He alone is and there is no other).

- *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 903.

or

ਤੁਧੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਸਿਰੇ ਸਿਰਿ ਧੰਧੇ ਲਾਇਆ ॥

(You have created the world and fixed tasks for each and everyone).

Ibid, p. 71

11. There are only two references to Jains in the *Bāṇī* of Guru Nanak i.e., 'Vār Mājh', and 'Vār Malār Kī' (*Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 149-50 and 1285). Both the references direct a vigorous attack against Jain beliefs and practices.

12. *Ibid*.

13. *Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 1290-91.

14. The *Nath Yogis* belong to an ascetic group of *Shaivism*. The *Nath Yogis* are directly connected with *Pashupata* (Lord Shiva). This group includes the

Kanphata Yogis and various other sub-sects all claiming allegiance to Gorakhnath. In all these *Nath* traditions there is emphasis on the combination of male and female energies. *Shiva* and *Shakti*, *Linga* and *Yoni*, *Pursha* and *Prakarti* etc. The *Yogi* groups are also noted for their wild, erotic and abhorrent practices and blood sacrifices. They follow the tradition of *Hath Yoga* in order to gain miraculous physical and psychical powers. A *Nath* has no social responsibility. He will not earn his living but would beg for his food. In short *Nathism* is a mysticism of rest, merger or inactivity. Its ethics, methodology, discipline and goal presents a world-view of life-negation.

15. Guru Nanak himself explicitly rejected *Nath* beliefs ('*Suhi*' 8, *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 730) and his works bear clear witness to open controversy with *Nath Yogis* :

ਜੋਗੁ ਨਾ ਖਿਥਾ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਡੰਡੇ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਭਸਮ ਚੜਾਈਐ॥
 ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਮੁੰਦੀ, ਮੂੰਡਿ ਮੁਡਾਇਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਸਿੰਡੀ ਵਾਈਐ॥
 ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ॥ ੧॥
 ਗਲੀ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥ ਏਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਕਰਿ ਸਮਸਰਿ ਜਾਣੇ ਜੋਗੀ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਈ॥ ੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ॥
 ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਮੜੀ ਮਸਾਣੀ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਤਾੜੀ ਲਾਈਐ॥
 ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਦੇਸਿ ਦਿਸੰਤਰਿ ਭਵਿਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਈਐ॥
 ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ॥ ੨॥
 ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਭੇਟੇ ਤਾ ਸਹਸਾ ਤੂਟੇ ਧਾਵਤੁ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹਾਈਐ॥
 ਨਿਝਰੁ ਝਰੈ ਸਹਜ ਧੁਨਿ ਲਾਗੈ ਘਰ ਹੀ ਪਰਚਾ ਪਾਈਐ॥
 ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ॥ ੩॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀਵਤਿਆ ਮਰਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਐਸਾ ਜੋਗੁ ਕਮਾਈਐ॥
 ਵਾਜੇ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਸਿੰਡੀ ਵਾਜੇ ਤਉ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਪਦੁ ਪਾਈਐ॥
 ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਤਉ ਪਾਈਐ॥ ੪॥

16. *Yoga* has numerous varieties from Patanjali's commendation of the practice of self-discipline to the *Prāṇāyām* (or breath control) Or *Hatha Yoga* with the entire mystique of arousing the *Kundalini* and six *chakras* (lotuses) and attainment of miraculous powers (*Ridhi* and *Siddhi*) and entering into the state of *Mahā-ananada* (Supreme bliss) and the state of *samādhi* (absorption into the Absolute). Other aspects of *Yoga* are *Shakti* cult, with certain kinds of reprobate actions associated with it, commonly known as *Vām mārga* (the left path).

17. Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (In English Translation), Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1984, Vol. I, Introduction, p.IXX.

18. ਨਿਵਲੀ ਕਰਮ ਭੁਅੰਗਮ ਭਾਠੀ ਰੋਚਕ ਪੂਰਕ ਕੁੰਭ ਕਰੈ॥
 ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਿਛੁ ਸੋਝੀ ਨਾਹੀ ਭਰਮੇ ਭੁਲਾ ਬੁਝਿ ਮਰੈ॥ ॥
 ਅੰਧਾ ਭਰਿਆ ਭਰਿ ਭਰਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਅੰਤਰ

ਕੀ ਮਲੁ ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਲਹੈ॥

ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਫੋਕਟ ਸਭਿ ਕਰਮਾ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਜੀਗਰੁ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲੈ॥

(One who engages in ritual cleansing of the intestines, kindling the furnace of *Kundalini*, and directs the passage of breath -

Is, in the absence of guidance from the holy Preceptor, in error ;

And gripped in doubts he is ruined.

Blind and covered with the filth of ignorance -

However much he may try to clean himself.

His mind not yet purified.

Without devotion to the holy Name all ritual is husk,

deluding man like juggler's tricks).

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1343.

19. Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, (Eng. Tr.) Introduction, p. I xxvi

20. Daljeet Singh, *The Sikh Ideology*, Guru Nanak Foundation, New Delhi, 1984, p. 66

21. Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, (Eng. Tr.) Introduction, p. xxi.

22. ਜੋਗੀ ਗਿਰਹੀ ਜਟਾ ਬਿਭੂਤ॥ ਆਗੈ ਪਾਛੈ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਪੂਤ॥

ਜੋਗੁ ਨਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਗਵਾਈ॥ ਕਿਤੁ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਛਾਈ ਪਾਈ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਲਿ ਕਾ ਏਹੁ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ॥ ਆਪੇ ਆਖਣੁ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੁ॥੧॥

(*Yogis* and householders smear their mated locks with ashes, while their children are wailing all around them for lack of support. By neglecting the true way of life is not *Yoga* attained. What good throwing ashes over one's own head? Saith Nanak : Such is the measure of *Kali-Yuga*. Each one is himself the spokesman and Judge). - *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 951

23. Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, (In English Translation), p. I xxi.

24. ਐਸੀ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਜੋਗੁ ਕਉ ਪਾਲੇ॥ ਆਪਿ ਤਰੈ ਸਗਲੇ ਕੁਲ ਤਾਰੇ॥

ਸੋ ਅਉਧੂਤੁ ਐਸੀ ਮਤਿ ਪਾਵੈ॥ ਅਹਨਿਸਿ ਸੁਨਿ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਸਮਾਵੈ॥

- *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 877

25. W.H. Mcleod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1968, p. 157.

26. According to Mcleod like Kabir, Guru Nanak reinterpreted the 'Saint inheritance' in the light of his own personality and experience (Ibid).

27. Ibid., p. 161.

28. In *Vaishnava bhakti* the essential religious response was of love. This love was directed to one of the *avtāras* of Lord *Vishnu*.

29. Daljeet Singh, *Essays on the Authenticity of Kartarpuri Bir And The Intergrated Logic and Unity of Sikhism*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1981.. p.67,94,95,96 and 98.

30. Ibid., p. 97.

31. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1293.

32. ਸੋ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ॥੩॥

(A hundred curses on the mouth who holds and declares that God incarnates).

- Ibid., p. 1136

33. Guru Nanak affirms :

ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਣਾ ਲਿਖਿ ਲੈ ਜਾਹੁ॥

ਆਪੇ ਬੀਜਿ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਖਾਹੁ॥

(Sow thyself the seed, consume the produce thereof). -Ibid., p. 4.

34. Ibid., p.930.

35. Guru Nanak affirms :

ਧੌਲੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਦਇਆ ਕਾ ਪੂਤੁ॥

ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਬਾਪਿ ਰਖਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਸੂਤਿ॥

(The Bull of Righteousness is born of compassion). -Ibid., p. 3.

36. Guru Nanak said :

ਸਹਸ ਸਿਆਣਪਾ ਲਖ ਹੋਹਿ ਤ ਇਕ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਨਾਲਿ॥

(A thousand and hundred thousand feats of intellect shall not accompany man in the hereafter). -Ibid., p. 1

37. Guru Nanak affirms :

ਭੈ ਭਾਇ ਭਗਤਿ ਤਰੁ ਭਵਜਲੁ ਮਨਾ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇ ਹਰਿ ਚਰਣੀ॥

ਹਰਿਨਾਮੁ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਪਾਵਨੁ ਇਹੁ ਸਰੀਰੁ ਤਉ ਸਰਣੀ॥

(One that practised loving devotion and seeks to be known as one of the lowly—Saith Nanak liberation shall attain). -Ibid., pp. 505-506.

38. Guru Nanak said :

ਵਿਣੁ ਗੁਣ ਕੀਤੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਇ॥

(Without performing meritorious deeds no *bhakti* can be attained).

- *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 4.

39. In 'Japuji' 34 (*Guru Granth Sahib*), the earth has been called 'Dharamsal' (place or field of righteousness) on which man is to engage in righteous action and not to retire in the world of self-imposed idleness. The closing line of the *saloka* of 'Japuji' also affirms this view.

40. Guru Nanak affirms :

ਦੋਵੇ ਤਰਫਾ ਉਪਾਇ ਇਕੁ ਵਰਤਿਆ॥

ਬੇਦ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਰਤਾਇ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਵਾਦੁ ਘਤਿਆ॥

ਪਰਵਰਤਿ ਨਿਰਵਰਤਿ ਹਾਠਾ ਦੋਵੇ ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਮੁ ਫਿਰੈ ਰੈਬਾਰਿਆ॥

The creator is sole Himself, having created the two states.

In *Veda*- utterances is introduced controversy.

Involvement with the world and renunciation are the extremes ;

In between operates righteousness that is the guide).

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1280

41. On the heroic theme of martyrdom Guru Nanak says :

ਮਰਣੁ ਨ ਮੰਦਾ ਲੋਕਾ ਲਾਖੀਐ ਜੇ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਐਸਾ ਕੋਇ॥

ਸੇਵਿਹੁ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸੰਮ੍ਰਥ ਆਪਣਾ ਪੰਥੁ ਸੁਚੇਲਾ ਆਗੈ ਹੋਇ॥

ਪੰਥਿ ਸੁਹੇਲੈ ਜਾਵਹੁ ਤਾਂ ਫਲੁ ਪਾਵਹੁ ਆਗੈ ਮਿਲੈ ਵਡਾਈ॥
 ਭੇਟੈ ਸਿਉ ਜਾਵਹੁ ਸਚਿ ਸਮਾਵਹੁ ਤਾਂ ਪਤਿ ਲੇਖੈ ਪਾਈ॥
 ਮਹਲੀ ਜਾਇ ਪਾਵਹੁ ਖਸਮੈ ਭਾਵਹੁ ਰੰਗ ਸਿਉ ਰਲੀਆ ਮਾਣੈ॥
 ਮਰਣੁ ਨ ਮੰਦਾ ਲੋਕਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਣੈ॥

(Blessed is the death of those heroic men, who lay down their lives in an approved cause). -Ibid, p. 579.

Again :

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੋਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ॥
 ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ॥

(Should thy heart be filled with the passion of love for God. Step into this path with thy head placed on thy palm.

He who treads the path

Must prepare to give up life without demur). -Ibid., p. 1412.

42. W. Owen Cole, *Sikhism and Its Indian Context* 1469-1708, D.K. Agencies (P) Ltd., New Delhi 1984, p. 275.

43. McLeod, Op. cit., p. 159

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., p. 160

46. W.Owen Cole, Op. Cit., p. 275.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid. p. 277

49. Kapur Singh, 'Guru Nanak the Founder of a World Religion', *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol.II No. I, Feb, 1975, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, p. 10.

50. Guru Nanak himself refers to this spiritual assignment as :

ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ॥

(I, a jobless ministrant, was assigned a rewarding task). - *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 150.

51. ਏਕੋ ਧਰਮੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜੈ ਸਚੁ ਕੋਈ॥

(For one, who practiseth Truth, there is only one Religion). -Ibid., p. 1188.

52. Narain Singh, *Guru Nanak Dev's View of Life, Amplified*, published by Bhagat Puran Singh, All India Pingalwara Society, Amritsar. n.d., p.22

53. Even the myth of Emperor Akbar's universal religion (out of combination of Hinduism and Islam), i.e., *Din-I-Ilahi* has been explored long ago by the researchers though it still survives in the text books on Indian History.

THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN GURU NANAK BĀṆĪ

MADANJIT KAUR

INTRODUCTORY

Rights are demands made upon the society by the individual. They are secured by law, because they are necessary conditions for the development of personality. Laski proclaims : 'Rights infact are those conditions of social life without which no man can seek, in general, to be his best.'¹

The conceptual framework of the term 'Human Rights' is an attainment of the nineteenth century. This consciousness of human rights had an evolutionary growth in the world of ideas.

There was no systematic theory of human rights during the ancient times. During the medieval period, the idea was that every man has his appointed status and a function to perform in a pre-established order. The established order was proclaimed to be a part of the universal order. It was during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that a new liberal spirit arose out of Reformation, Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution and the crave for *laissez faire*. The modern theory of rights is highly individualistic in character and stokes claims against the established authority of the Church and the State, expressing itself theologically in Protestantism, economically in Mercantile Capitalism and philosophically cum politically, in the theory of Natural Rights and Social Contract.'²

Indeed, since the seventeenth century this awareness has been progressively developing in liberal democratic as well as socialist countries infecting those of the third world too. Virtually all states now subscribe officially to some doctrine of human rights and, in each case, there is a general political theory justifying the kind of society and the political institution established by each.

From its historical perspective it can be clearly seen that the

concept of rights emerged in modern times out of criticism of the existing order. Its tone was radical and in its ultimate employment was revolutionary. The demand for individual rights, was made by the rising commercial middle class, the so called bourgeois which was the by-product of Industrial Revolution. Furthermore, the concept of individual rights was the accepted ideology of the American and the French revolutionaries. Its spirit and demand was expressed in the Declaration of Independence and Constitutional Bill of Rights in America, and in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, in France. It is also perceptible that wherever enumerated, these rights expressed the moral conscience and revolt against the injustice and cruelties of times.

Human Rights is now the dominating theme of our age. The concept is based on the reality of shared aspirations and needs of all men and women. One of the main purposes of every legal system is to protect the individual oppression. Ordinarily the rights of individuals are protected at the local and national levels. In some cases, if no protection can be found recourse may be had to appropriate international institutions. Subsequently, international rules and procedures for the protection of human rights were developed against abuse by local authorities. A series of treaties concluded after World War I imposed upon several European countries special obligations for the protection of racial, religious and national minorities, and authorized the League of Nations to supervise the execution of these obligations. It was however, the ruthless tyranny of the *Nazi* regime and the prostylization of Jews by the Germans during the World War II that brought about a widespread insistence that human rights must be internationally protected. At the San Francisco Conference of 1945 decision was taken and seven specific references to human rights were included in the Charter of the United Nations. Subsequently, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights was entrusted with preparation of a declaration on Human Rights³. A European Court of Human Rights was established in 1959 to enforce convention of human rights and individuals were allowed to bring complaints in the form of petitions to a European Commission of Human Rights.

Subsequently, effective measures were provided for direct international promotion of human rights through Amnesty International.

This is in brief the story of the origin and development of the Human Rights. It is in this perspective that we have to study the level of Sikh consciousness of human rights in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with special reference to Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism.

4.2 HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIAN RELIGIOUS TRADITION

It is necessary to mention a few words about the concept of human rights in Indian Religious traditions earlier to the advent of Sikhism so that we can have a better understanding of the comparative study of our theme.

We can easily formulate an idea of the consciousness of human rights among the Indians from the very ancient times to the Mughal period if we are familiar with their scripture and secular literature. It is evident from the *Vedic* texts, *Manusmriti*, epics (*Ramāyana* and *Mahābhārata*) and secular texts like Kautilya's *Arthśāstra* and Banabhatta's *Rajatarangani* that Hindu India was aware more of the concepts of a centralised autocratic state of *hereditary social rights* and class privileges rather than of the concept of human rights. Since ancient Hindu scriptures permitted only those human acts and aspirations (*Karma*) which were sanctioned by *Varnasharam dharma* and its consequent social stratification, the *Jāti* (Caste), there was no place for human freedom and equality or compensation to common man in the Hindu ideology. Besides, the basic metaphysical concept of Hinduism that individuality is an evil *per se* which every Hindu must shun in order to attain *mukti* negated the very foundation of human rights. Similarly in Jainism and Buddhism also, the extinction of personality was essential for the attainment of *nirvāna*. Thus, in the whole of Hindu thought individuality and personality had no value in the social context.

On the other hand Sikhism did not regard an individual as an evil mirage to be destroyed, but the very foundation on which the whole of religious activity is to be built. For in Sikhism *mukti* is

not by dissolution of personality but its development through struggle in social life. The Sikh theodicy precepts :

Live a life of endeavour and enterprise and thus
produce and earn your living, for this is the
happy way of life.⁴

Thus, the concept of the rights of man which played such a dynamic part in the modern growth of democratic political thought in Europe but lay neglected in Hindu thought as vanity and illusion; found an important place in the religious ideology of the Sikhs of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

With the Indian Muslims, the position was different. They were ruled by theocratic state bounded by the Muslim law enshrined in *Sharā* and *Hadis*. Islam is basically founded on the notion of social equality. But in practice the idea of natural rights and the social welfare theory of human rights in the wider perspective of humanity was marginal in Islamic society. The position was totally different in Sikhism where sovereign status of the individual and the collective identity of the *Sangat/Panth* had been accepted as co-related ingredients. This is how both identity and integration were ensured in the social vision of Guru Nanak. In sociological terms, this meant that there should be no homogenisation of individual variety into uniformity and a consequent suppression of human freedom.

4.3 GURU NANAK'S VISION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

This study is primarily based on *Guru Granth Sahib* the scripture of the Sikhs, which is an embodiment of monotheism, universalism, humanism, tolerance, freedom and equality. The *Bāṇī* recorded in the *Guru Granth Sahib* is very much concerned with the contemporary socio-political milieu. It provides the reader with an insight into definite responses to the contemporary life situations of that time. It stresses the demand of the Rule of Law and a Just State. The presence of the seed idea of human rights in the *Guru Granth Sahib* is a revealing factor for a student of cultural history of India. The evidence of the *Guru Granth* is very helpful in formulating a hypothesis of the level of the Sikh consciousness of the human rights in the fifteenth and sixteenth

centuries.

The milieu in which Guru Nanak lived (A.D. 1469-1539) was a crucial period of Indian history. The perception of historical reality of the age and its challenges were transformed into a positive discerning vision which was clearly reflected in some of his hymns. It is evident from his *Bāṇī* that the pangs of existence in his times touched his compassionate heart to make him feel deeply concerned at the suffering of his fellow beings.⁵ His disenchantment with the whole social order is evident from his culmination on the then prevalent religious beliefs, moral values, rationalized corruption at all levels of administration, disintegrating effect of the autocratic rule, political chaos, oppression and degradation of human life leading to negation of human values and rights.⁶

Guru Nanak set out on long itineraries (*Udāsīs*) to preach his message.⁷ At the culmination of his spiritual search in India and the Middle East, Guru Nanak was convinced that he had been called upon to proclaim Divine Truth to all men and women, irrespective of caste and creed.⁸ With his vast experience and background Guru expounded his doctrine for the spiritual emancipation and social uplift of mankind. The path commended by Guru Nanak harmoniously integrates spiritualism and involvement in the secular world.⁹ In the Sikh theology, the world is real,¹⁰ man has a purpose¹¹ and freedom of will, he is the only creature who seeks an ultimate meaning of his existence.¹² This ideology has a clear ring of deep involvement in secular affairs, a serious awareness of social responsibility and strong motivation for constructive activity in the phenomenal world. So, Guru Nanak called upon men to fallback on their own inner resources to build a future.¹³

Guru Nanak gave social orientation to spiritual values. His theology was in no manner akin to the perception of the quietist religions. As a Prophet of new religion with his basic doctrines of Unity of God and Equality of Man he categorically rejected all prejudices against caste, class and woman, as also abject surrender to exploitation and oppression. The acceptance of householder's life¹⁴ consequent necessity of work as a religious

duty and the sharing and fair distribution of wealth¹⁵ in society logically flowed from Guru Nanak's involvement in social praxis.

The life stories of Guru Nanak, called *Janamsākhīs*,¹⁶ record that he spent the last thirteen years of his life at Kartarpur (near Dera Baba Nanak) and gave practical expression to his religious ideology. The idea of Equality before God found expression in the congregational worship of the community (*sangat*) and in the common kitchen (*pangat and langar*), maintained by voluntary contribution in cash, kind and services (*sewa*).¹⁷ The various *Janamsākhī* traditions record that Guru Nanak summed up the fundamental Sikh tenets for his followers in three simple precepts:

kirat karo, wand chhako and nām japo

Meaning thereby :

Work and earn thy livelihood by honest means ;
share the fruits of thy labour with others ;
and practice the discipline of *nām* (remembering God).

The first two precepts, that of honest human beings are to provide a stern base to the Sikh society, while the third one is to vitalize and regenerate it. In the social structure recommended by Guru Nanak every individual must engage himself in honest productive labour, all forms of mendicancy, parastism or begging in any shape or form is considered not only anti-social but anti-religious too.¹⁸ It is also implied that there should be no exploitation of other's rights which was characterized as sin by Guru Nanak.¹⁹ An individual therefore, must never be coerced, exploited or imposed upon.²⁰

Guru Nanak denounced all sorts of socio-cultural divisions as artificial creations of man and rejects the notion of superiority of the economically rich class and elite group over the poor and the common. The story of his preference to dine with the poor carpenter Lalo instead with the rich man Malik Bhago stands testimony to this point. Wealth has been the most important determinant factor of status in Society through ages and poor have been subjected to all kinds of socio-political exploitation, humiliation, prejudice and biases. Guru Nanak was aware of the societal role of economic factor. He enjoined upon every able

bodied to earn and ensured that one must share his earnings with needy fellow beings.²¹ The Guru not only advocated human equality but made it the fundamental principle to regulate social relations through the institution of *Saṅgat*, *Laṅger* and *Paṅgat*.

Guru Nanak's concern for human rights is based on the well being of the total man in social context. He vehemently protested against the institution of slavery and preached that the multitudes of slaves were not supposed to toil and sweat in tireless service of the privileged one.²² He wanted all human beings to be free from fear, hostility and slavish mentality. He deplored plight of those who continued to live in a state of constant humiliation and insult. Leading such a life of suffering and degradation was condemned by Guru Nanak as amounting to the eating of the tabooed food.²³ In this way the Guru was able to place the demand of human rights in the ethics of creative enlightenment and universal spiritualism.²⁴

DIGNITY OF INDIVIDUAL

The very bases of true democracy is the dignity of individual as an end in itself and as the ultimate source of all civic and political power. It is this aspect of Sikh culture which is the axial of the status of human rights in Sikhism. It is the notion of self-respect, the awareness of man's ultimate significance in the creation of God which imparted to Sikhs of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries an awareness of human rights. Guru Nanak considered man as the abode of God and professed that he (man) should be treated with due respect.²⁵

Guru Nanak propounded his notion of a life of self-respect in '*Var Majh*'.²⁶ He set out to establish a society founded strongly on ethical values which could protest against exploitation and protect freedom and equality. But the scheme of life commended by Guru Nanak is that of a man of action fully aware of his life situation.²⁷

AWARENESS

For the protection of human rights it is essential that people must know their rights and be fully conscious of them. The ignorance of the people and their suffering consequent upon it

have therefore been declaimed vehemently by Guru Nanak in *Asa di Var* :

the ignorant people are busy in performing duty for others. They are totally devoid of having any knowledge of their rights and self-respect, the miserable masses are depending upon their masters for their bare living.²⁸

In *Ramkali* Guru Nanak deplores the cultural decline of the Indian society and says:

the people have forgotten their cultural heritage and are imitating the aliens (Muslims) in their language, dress and life manners.²⁹

No other Indian leader professing to be a saviour of people of that age has anything to show of the kind as does Guru Nanak.

EQUALITY

Generally speaking, equality occupies an important place in any debate on human rights. Equality is the foundation of human rights. In the absence of equality, no other human right can be conceived. Sikh democratic tradition is securely grounded on the postulate of equality and the idea of freedom emerges out of it. The concept of Unity of the universe, nay of the whole cosmos pronounced by Guru Nanak leads to the idea of Universality of human spirit and the consequent equality of all human beings.³⁰

The social values which have been advocated and practiced by Guru Nanak are human centric and its infrastructure provides for the maintenance and growth of man from a natural being to a spiritual being grounded in the spirit of universal brotherhood.³¹ It is evident from Guru Nanak Bāṇī that relations among classes based on economic resources, political considerations and social status have been envisaged in terms of equality.³² In order to inculcate a true spirit of brotherhood, Guru Nanak established a society, where all sorts of socio-economic, political and psychological differentiations were sought to be mitigated on the level of equality. Therefore Guru Nanak's preachings provide a cornerstone of the Sikh perspective on human rights to equality.

REPUDIATION OF CASTE

The most obvious characteristics of the Sikh concept of the Human Rights in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries is the repudiation of the Hindu Caste system based on *varnāsharam dharma* and *Jāti*. The basic principle of the *varna* doctrine was that the division of the human society into four-fold classes is innate and it cannot be annulled. It held that while *varna* is based on innate, predestined qualitative differentiation, the *jāti* is primarily functional, its implications being that civil and religious rights and duties were delimited to the social group in which one was born. Therefore in Vedic religious tradition there was neither a place for social equality nor any system of ethical social values of universal validity.³³ This highly compartmental social system of Hinduism had generated inequality in human rights from times immemorial. The *varna* doctrine of the Hindu society sustains the economic and social apartheid explicit in the *jāti* group and therefore is a total negation of secular and economic freedom.³⁴ The doctrinal and theoretical basis of the Hindu caste system also justify the functional perpetuation of privileges in human society on the political and social levels.

A deep probe into the social history of India reveals that although caste system was ignored or not taken into consideration by various holymen including Buddha, Mahavira, Saints and *Bhaktas*, it was never repudiated by them. They simply declared that religious activities were open to all castes without distinction. It were the Sikh *Gurus* who broke fresh ground in the social history of India and refuted fixed position of social stratification of Hindu Society³⁵ as well as authority of the social laws of the *Vedas*.³⁶ Protection of human rights and establishment of a universal human society was the aim of Guru Nanak. Therefore, he openly rejected class inequalities and economic apartheid of the caste hierarchy of the Hindus.³⁷

He repudiated unreservedly the religious sanction and theological validity of birth and caste distinctions.³⁸ He refused to admit that there were any divinely ordained classes among mankind, he denied that social gradation determined social ethics and civic obligations or rights of the individual.³⁹ He openly

denounced class and caste distinctions as man made and invalid.⁴⁰ Guru Nanak went to the extent of declaring that :

The doctrine and institution of class gradation and *varna* are against the Will of God, for He giveth no arbitrary advantage to one over another.⁴¹

The *Bānī* of Guru Nanak repeatedly stressed the rejection of caste system, no doubt realising its multifaceted negative consequences and the dire necessity to the social revolution which he ushered in.⁴²

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Thus, Guru Nanak laid down solid foundation of democratic society in which social justice was secured and human rights were to be protected by rule of law.⁴³ For, Guru Nanak not only established a *Panth* but also allocated it a task. It is this thesis which imparted vitality, political strength and civic consciousness to the Sikh community.

Sikhism believes in social justice and all round human progress which are the demands of the social laws of the modern times. Not only the obligation of doctrinal orthodoxy has been abandoned but also every fixed position i.e. rituals, rites, sacraments, customs and ceremonies and even adherence to classical languages has been questioned in the process of making sense out of men and his situation.

The vision of Guru Nanak holds that all laws, all rules of conduct which tend to retard the social justice and progress of the individual towards the ultimate aim of life are forbidden, and those which are helpful to this progress are legitimate.⁴⁴ For that reason Sikhism denounced *Vedic* social laws as well as semitic concept of divinely codified laws which are no more than by products of human imagination.⁴⁵

The *Vedas* their metaphysical theses, *sastras*, and the *smritis*, none of them are eternal.⁴⁶ The codes of laws and *smritis* which claim status of true exegesis of the *Vedas* are just chains that bind human society.⁴⁷

Therefore they are not grounded in the ultimate value. Guru

Nanak made it clear :

that *Vedas* and *smritis* which are ultimate and indispensable sources of law for the Hindu society, are not so for the Sikhs.⁴⁸

Equally significant was Guru Nanak's decision to use local language for his own compositions for the liturgical purpose, for it meant an unequivocal rejection of the authority of the *Vedic* scriptures as well as the use of *Sanskrit* as a language of religion which were the monopoly of the *Brahmins*.⁴⁹

Similarly, the discrimination on the basis of creed was discarded. Sikhism regards all religions as various paths of union with God.⁵⁰ Guru Nanak regarded the way to God as universal and repudiated all notions about determinism and monopoly of any privileged person, caste or group.

The *Bāṇī* of Guru Nanak is, in fact, a cultural index of the awareness of human rights of the early fifteenth and the sixteenth century Sikhs. This is adequately proved from his *Bāṇī* where he strongly protested and condemned the feudal tyranny and sanctioned a crusade against injustice and exploitation. His concern for helpless underdogs of society, the low classes and the women folk was a pointer to his progressive ideology.

The potentialities of Guru Nanak's vision of human rights can be explored in the perspective of his scathing attack on contemporary social, cultural and political conditions as depicted in his *Asa di Var* :

Asa di Var presents direct evidence of a well formulated political ideology of Guru Nanak with strong ethical commitments. Similarly strong streaks of the concept of equality, and the depth of its directional thrust is also discernible from the hymns of the *Asa di Var*. Guru Nanak says:

Neither caste nor political power can confer real status to any person.⁵¹

Asa di Var openly repudiates institutionalised orthodoxy, ritualism, casteism, social taboos, exploitation, lack of justice, corruption, total negation of human values and slavish culture. The revolutionary ideas nurtured carefully in *Asa di Var* deserve to be studied in depth in order to get an idea of the level of consciousness of human rights as perceived in Sikhism. For

example let us imagine the meaning of the following idea of Guru Nanak :

Whenever the springs of society are vitiated by the dominance of avarice, sin, falsehood, sex, bribery, beggary, wealth and misuse of religion, honourable living becomes difficult.⁵²

POSITION OF WOMAN

Sexual discrimination has been a universal phenomenon in human history since time immemorial. Although woman had been treated with tenderness and reverence in the Hindu Texts (*Vedas and Smritis*) throughout the ages past, her social position had always been considered inferior and subordinate to man in the Indian society. The condition of woman in Islamic society was no different. Guru Nanak not only repudiated this nexus of the social status of woman, but declared her to be the very essence of social coherence and progress and vehemently condemned the bias, negative attitude or any suggestion of relegating her to an inferior position in any manner whatsoever. Unlike *Nathas* and *Yogis* he did not consider woman as a hindrance in the path of salvation. The Guru regarded social relationship of man and woman as a part of law of nature and accepted householder's life as superior morally as well as spiritually. The Guru pronounced that women folk must be given due respect as equal member of our society.⁵³ This helped in the restoration of status of woman in Sikh society. This ideological position of Sikhism is another evidence of Sikhs' firm faith in human rights.

PROTEST AGAINST STATE POLICY OF REPRESSION

The great socio-political implication of *Asa di Var* lies in its condemnation of exploitation and the state policy of repression. Clear hints can be found in the following :

Even the highest in the land does not have an everlasting right to the highest political office.⁵⁴ Submission to or acceptance of an exploitative and rapacious administrative system at any level amounts to active participation in the perpetuation of corruption and cruelty.⁵⁵ Well fed and expensive bureaucracy tends to sit perpetually on the necks of the people even when their doom may be in the offing.⁵⁶ It

must be kept in mind that most often, the bureaucrats are double-hued sycophants.⁵⁷

The Guru's reaction towards the state policy of repression seems to provide a strong motivation to readers and listeners to feel encouraged to have a critical look at the working of the society and doings of the administrative agencies of the contemporary state. Guru Nanak regards the exploitation as a great crime for which there is no redemption.⁵⁸ Even economic exploitation has been condemned in Sikhism.⁵⁹ It can be easily imagined that the sufferers of the loathsome caste system, the economically weaker section of the society who constituted the large majority of people must have found such declamations of Guru Nanak quite attractive and the women must have experienced a new hope.

In Guru Nanak's time Babur invaded India and brought much carnage, destruction and humiliation to the Indian people. Guru Nanak was a witness to Babur's massacre at Emnabad (now in Pakistan).⁶⁰ In his great vision on the destiny of nation, Guru Nanak raised his voice in Divine indignation at Babur's invasion.⁶¹ He lamented the loss of nation⁶² and deplored the brutality of the invaders and un-preparedness of the local Afghan rulers. He went to the extent of voicing a protest to God, as the guardian of man, for allowing the weak to be oppressed by the strong.⁶³ In doing so he was, in fact, clearly laying one of the basic principles of his religion. He not only sanctioned the use of force for a righteous cause⁶⁴ but also prescribed that it was both the duty and responsibility of religious man to resist aggression and brutality.⁶⁵ It is implied in the vision of Guru Nanak that if in any field of life, there is aggression or injustice, the religious man cannot remain neutral; he must react in a righteous way. This is the logical corollary of the householders life he advocated. Therefore, the traditionally created barriers of socio-political segments and religious particularism were deemed artificial and were, once for all broken for the religious man.⁶⁶

In the theology of Guru Nanak, man as an instrument of God has to carry out the 'Will of God' in helping weak and destroying the oppressor. Guru Nanak's spiritual system therefore, involved

the use of all available tools, including reason⁶⁷ and judicious use of force, for the purposeful progress of man.⁶⁸ For, without the use of both these means it is impossible to bring about any social change and to secure human rights. In doing so, the Guru made a major departure from the earlier Indian religious systems (except Islam). Guru Nanak positively sanctioned entry into the political field.⁶⁹

The doctrine of *Miri* and *Piri* (the combination of spiritual and secular concerns) was finally institutionalized by Guru Hargobind, his fifth successor. According to Cresten Niebuhr the famous historian of the nineteenth century, relation between groups is a matter of politics and relation between individuals is the final answer to human history. This thesis helps us to have a better understanding of the Sikh ideology. Guru Nanak wished to establish the kingdom of God on earth. According to Guru Nanak man is to be engaged in action that may further God's plan of righteousness in the world.⁷⁰ He projected his ideology to be applied to practical life, to the challenges of social inequality and to the attainment of freedom and economic self sufficiency. The Guru actually put into practice what the Christian theologian suggested in the twentieth century.⁷¹ This break with the past was the result of Guru Nanak's objective vision of human rights.

The mission of Guru Nanak was to establish a society that had internally to remove the disintegrating forces of the caste hierarchy and externally to fight against political aggression. It was a difficult task. The Guru had first to organise a new society intensely motivated with moral values and real sense of brotherhood, ready to struggle for justice and deeply committed to achieve these goals. For this purpose Guru Nanak introduced the institution of appointing a successor so that in due course the society could become fully organised and mature enough to complete the task set before it. The *Panth* established by Guru Nanak was subsequently developed and strengthened by his successors in order to secure full human rights as propounded by its founder.

In the *Bānī* of Guru Nanak there are numerous references to political oppression and insistence on the ideal of justice. These

two points are directly related to the basic issues of the human rights. Both these aspects of Guru Nanak's comments on politics are also emphasised in the literature produced by his successors and followers.

Guru Angad, the second in line of the Sikh Preceptors was deeply concerned with his contemporary socio-political milieu and deplored the lack of justice, insecurity of individual rights, rule of falsehood and ignorance.⁷² Guru Amardas, the third Guru of the Sikhs, protested against pilgrimage tax (*Jazia*) on his visit to Haridwar. The Guru branded it as a *jabar* (atrocities) and did not pay the tax.⁷³ Subsequently, the tax was exempted by the state officials. The Mughal Emperors after Akbar had interfered in the affairs of the Sikh Gurus.⁷⁴ The economic exploitation has been condemned by Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs. He had to give his life for the struggle for the precious human rights of freedom of worship and hospitality to all visitors, which was not liked by the then Mughal ruler Jehangir. The Emperor's bias is recorded in his memoirs *Tuzuk-i-Jehangiri*.⁷⁵ Guru Arjan had been put to death under the orders of Jehangir in 1605.

Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru introduced martial traits in the Sikhs, made them equipped with arms for self defence and combined in his pontificate the doctrine of *Miri* and *Piri* at institutional level.⁷⁶ The Guru had to fight with the Mughals for self defence.⁷⁷ Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth Guru sacrificed his life for the sake of freedom of worship.⁷⁸ The Guru had been put to death through Aurangzeb's orders in 1675.

This long tradition of struggle provides an indispensable insight into the beliefs and attitude of the followers of Guru Nanak as members of a new religious group. The logical connection between the ideology of Guru Nanak and its interpretation by his successors is a clear evidence of the fact that the awareness of human rights introduced by Guru Nanak was very clear and meaningful to his followers. As a consequence the *Panth* of Guru Nanak became a political force of considerable reckoning before the death of his last successor in 1708 A.D. Guru Gobind Singh had to come out in an open armed struggle against the Mughals, as matter of principles and difference of

attitude towards the state.

The conflict between the State and the Guru was not for personal motives or to establish a parallel State but for principles and freedom of action implying human rights. The Guru took solid measures to solve the imminent interference by the rulers. The creation of *Khalsa* in 1699 was made to resist tyranny and establish equality and justice.⁷⁹ Guru Gobind Singh's idea of universal brotherhood cut across all sorts of racial, regional, religious and national barriers.⁸⁰ The Guru accepted unity amidst diversity and stressed upon inculcating a sense of universal goodwill and brotherhood.⁸¹ This spirit permeated throughout the development of the Sikh community. Consequently, political equality was made an article of faith among the Sikhs.

The nature of the political struggle of the Sikhs in the eighteenth century further brought to the fore the Sikh struggle for freedom and human rights. After the death of Guru Gobind Singh the Sikhs had established sovereign rule in a large part of the Punjab under the leadership of Banda Bahadur. This rule was short lived, the Sikhs had to undergo repressive measures of the State. The Mughals wished to liquidate them. But they survived of this grave political struggle. The *Panth* of eighteenth century was intimately connected with the idea of equality. The idea of egalitarian society was further crystallized in the Sikh polity in the second and third quarters of the eighteenth century under the leadership of the *Misals*.⁸²

From the exposition of Sikh view of human rights it is evident that any political structure, wherein the citizens are required to relinquish their rights of equality and freedom, is not acceptable to the social paradigm of Sikh doctrines. Similarly all political theories and social ideology which result in subjugation, suppression or curtailing of the spiritual autonomy of the individual are not acceptable to Sikhism. The current Sikh unrest in India is as much to the realities of situation as to the basic Sikh doctrines of the status of the individual's right which is not compatible with the implication of a overcentralised state of the present political structure.

In this context, it is imperative to bring original tenants of

Sikhism in proper focus today, when the vested interests have used the current militant uprising in the Punjab to malign the image of the Sikh community as terrorists and anti-nationalists.

It is necessary to point out here, that the ideal society in Sikh-view is not a church state or theocratic set up, where uniformity of religion is necessary in order to secure national unity and social stability. Sikhism firmly believes that there is a fundamental unity in all true religions, which are apparently diverse but fundamentally the same. Sikhism holds the view that it is the duty of an organised religion not only to accept and uphold liberty of conscience, but also to defend actively the right to such liberty of those conscience moves. Guru Tegh Bahadur became a martyr to this cause (the protection of *tilak* and *janeu*, symbolism of Hinduism). Guru Tegh Bahadur was not a votary of these religious signs. Yet he staked his life to defend the rights of those who believed in them.

Implicit in the protest of the Guru was his concern to secure the people the human rights and freedom of belief. In the Sikh congregational prayer (*ardās*) throughout the world where ever the Sikhs meet, they solemnly dream and desire for the universal welfare of the entire humanity; *Nanak Nām Chardi Kalā Tere Bhāṇe Sarbat Kā Bhalā*.

It can be surmised from the above study that in Guru Nanak's philosophy of protest against the inequalities of the existing social system and the oppression of the political set up lay the seed of a vital and progressive vision of human rights. It provided his followers a meaning of their existence and motivated them to change their attitudes and values of life and brought them awareness about their self respect, human rights and social responsibilities.

In this way Guru Nanak proved to be a significant profit of change who initiated, caused and introduced an objective and universal vision of human rights in the sixteenth century Punjab. With this awareness began the construction of a new society based on objective system of moral values, social justice and individual rights which resulted in the emergence of the Sikh *Panth* to meet the historical challenges of the times.

REFERENCES

1. Harold Laski, *A Grammer of Politics*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1951, p.91.
2. Ben and Peters, *Social Principles And The Democratic State*, George Allen and Unwin, London 1975, p.95.
3. The declaration contained general definitions of the civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights. To the first group belong such rights as; life, liberty and the security of person, freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention or exile; right to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and freedom of peaceful assembly and association. The other items in the declaration were right to work, right to education, right to participation in the cultural life of the community; and right to enjoy the arts and to share a scientific advancement and its benefits.
4. ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇਦਿਆ ਜੀਉ ਤੂੰ ਕਮਾਵਦਿਆ ਸੁਖੁ ਤੂੰਚੁ॥ (*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 522)
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 145, 260, 360, 417, 468, 471, 630, 722, 723, 903, 951, 1191 and 1288.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 145, 260, 468-69, 951, 1288.
7. The works of Bhai Gurdas, the famous theologian of sixteenth century stands a testimony to this version :
ਚੜਿਆ ਸੋਧਣਿ ਧਰਤਿ ਲੁਕਾਈ॥ *Vāran Bhāi Gurdās*, eds. Giani Hazara Singh and Bhai Vir Singh, *Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 1972 Var I, Pauri 24, p. 20.
8. ਏਕੇ ਧਰਮੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜੈ ਸਚੁ ਕੋਈ॥ *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1188
9. *Ibid.*, 1280
10. ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਸਚੇ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਸਚੇ ਕਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 463.
11. ਭਈ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਹੁਰੀਆ॥
ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਿਲਣ ਕੀ ਇਹੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਰੀਆ॥ *Ibid.*, p. 12
12. ਮਾਟੀ ਕਾ ਲੇ ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਕਰਿਆ॥
ਉਕਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਲੇ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਪਰੀਖਿਆ॥
...
ਸਗਲ ਜੋਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਤੂ ਸਿਰਿ ਧਰਿਆ॥
ਅਬ ਤੂ ਸੀਝੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀਝੈ॥ *Ibid.*, p.913
13. *Ibid.*
14. Pauri 34 and 35 of the *Japuji* affirms this view.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 552 and 1376.
16. ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ॥

- ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੋਇ॥ Ibid., p. 1245
17. There are four major traditions of *Janamasākhīs*; *Purāṭan*, *Meharban*, *Bālā*, *Gyān Ratnāvalī* or *Bhāī Manī Singh Janamsākhī* : Besides, B40 *Janamsākhī* (preserved in India office library, London) is also of considerable importance as source of information for the life history of Guru Nanak.
 18. J.S. Grewal, 'The Panth of Guru Nanak' in *Essays from Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1972, p.39.
 19. ਸਿਰੁ ਬੋਹਾਇ ਪੀਅਹਿ ਮਲਵਾਣੀ
ਜੂਠਾ ਮੰਗਿ ਮੰਗਿ ਖਾਹੀ॥ *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 149
Also :
ਜੋਗੀ ਬੈਸਿ ਰਹਹੁ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਭਾਗੈ॥
ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਮਾਗਤ ਲਾਜ ਨ ਲਾਗੈ॥ Ibid., p. 903
 20. ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ॥ Ibid., 141
 21. Baba Farid says :
ਜੇ ਤਉ ਪਿਰੀਆ ਦੀ ਸਿਕ
ਹਿਆਉ ਨ ਠਾਹੇ ਕਹੀ ਦਾ॥ Ibid., p. 1384
 22. Ibid., p. 1245.
 23. Ibid. pp. 469,472,951 and 1191.
Baba Farid also protested against slavery :
ਫਰੀਦਾ ਬਾਰਿ ਪਰਾਇਐ ਬੈਸਣਾ ਸਾਂਈ ਮੁਝੈ ਨ ਦੇਹਿ॥
ਜੇ ਤੂ ਏਵੈ ਰਖਸੀ ਜੀਉ ਸਰੀਰਹੁ ਲੇਹਿ॥ Ibid., p. 1380
 24. ਜੇ ਜੀਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਲਥੀ ਜਾਇ॥
ਸਭੁ ਹਰਾਮੁ ਜੋਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਇ॥ Ibid., p. 142
 25. This is explicitly derived from *pauri* 5 and 6 in *Japuji* (Ibid., p.4) and various other hymns of Guru Nanak.
 26. ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੋ ਸੋਇ॥
ਤਿਸ ਕੇ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ॥ Ibid., p. 663
 27. Ibid., 142
 28. ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ॥
ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੋਰੀ ਆਉ॥
ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੇ॥ ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੇ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੇ॥ Ibid., p. 1412
 29. Ibid., p. 350
 30. Ibid., p. 903
 31. ਸਭ ਮਇ ਵਰਤੈ ਏਕੋ ਸੋਇ॥ Ibid. p. 13, Also p. 71.
 32. Santokh Singh , *Philosophical Foundation of the Sikh Value System*, Munshiram, Manoharlal, Delhi, 1987, p. 67.
 33. The testimony of Bhāi Gurdas confirms this fact :

- ਰਾਜਾ ਰੋਕ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ॥ (ਵਾਰਾਂ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ, ਸੰਪਾਦਕ Bhai Vir Singh), Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1972, Var 23; Pauri 20, p. 387.
34. Kapur Singh, *Parasarpasna* (eds. Piar Singh and Madanjit Kaur) Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar, 1988, p. 260.
 35. Ibid., p. 161
 36. Guru Nanak ordained :
ਜਾਤਿ ਬਰਨ ਕੁਲ ਸਹਸਾ ਚੂਕਾ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਬਿਚਾਰੀ॥ *Guru Granth Sahib*, 1198
 37. Guru Amar Das declared :
ਤ੍ਰੈ ਗੁਣ ਬਾਣੀ ਬੇਦ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ॥
ਬਿਖਿਆ ਮੇਲੁ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ॥ Ibid., p. 1262.
 38. Kapur Singh, *Op. cit.*, p. 277-280.
 39. ਜਾਤਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਨਹ ਪੂਛੀਐ ਸਚ ਘਰੁ ਲੇਹੁ ਬਤਾਇ॥ *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1330
 40. ਜਾਣਹੁ ਜੋਤਿ ਨ ਪੂਛਹੁ ਜਾਤੀ ਆਰੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੇ॥ Ibid., p. 349
 41. ਫਕੜ ਜਾਤੀ ਫਕੜੁ ਨਾਉ॥
ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਇਕਾ ਛਾਉ॥ Ibid., p. 83.
 42. ਵਰਨਾ ਵਰਨ ਨ ਭਾਵਨੀ ਜੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਡਾ ਕਰੇਇ॥ Ibid., p. 53
Reminding this lesson to the Sikhs, Guru Amar Das said :
ਜਾਤਿ ਕਾ ਗਰਬੁ ਨ ਕਰਿ ਮੂਰਖ ਗਵਾਰਾ॥
ਇਸੁ ਗਰਬ ਤੇ ਚਲਹਿ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਵਿਕਾਰਾ॥ Ibid., p. 1128
 43. ਰਾਜਾ ਤਖਤਿ ਟਿਕੈ ਗੁਣੀ ਭੈ ਪੰਚਾਇਣ ਰਤੁ॥ Ibid., p. 992
Also :
ਰਾਜੇ ਚੁਲੀ ਨਿਆਵ ਕੀ ਪੜਿਆ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ॥ Ibid., p. 1240
See also J.S. Bains 'Political Idea of Guru Nanak' in *Indian Journal of Political Science*, Delhi. Vol. XXIII No.4, 1962, pp. 313-18.
 44. Kapur Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 277.
 45. ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਇਵਤਰਾ ਭਾਈ
ਦਿਲ ਕਾ ਫਿਕਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ॥ Ibid., p. 727
 46. Guru Arjan Dev announced :
ਸਾਸਤ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਬਿਨਸਹਿਗੇ ਬੇਦਾ॥ Ibid., p. 237
 47. Kabir denounced :
ਬੇਦ ਕੀ ਪੁੜੀ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਭਾਈ॥
ਸਾਂਕਲ ਜੇਵਰੀ ਲੈ ਹੈ ਆਈ॥ Ibid., p. 329
 48. ਸਾਸਤੁ ਬੇਦੁ ਬਕੈ ਖੜੋ ਭਾਈ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਹੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ॥
ਪਾਖੰਡਿ ਮੇਲੁ ਨ ਚੂਕਈ ਭਾਈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਮੇਲੁ ਵਿਕਾਰੀ॥ Ibid., p. 635
 49. Madanjit Kaur, *Guru Nanak And His Teachings*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar 1989, p. 21.
 50. ਨਾਨਕੁ ਵੇਚਾਰਾ ਕਿਆ ਕਹੈ॥ ਸਭੁ ਲੋਕੁ ਸਲਾਹੇ ਏਕਸੈ॥

- ਸਿਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਲੋਕਾ ਪਾਵ ਹੈ॥ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਜਾਉ ਜੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਵ ਹੈ॥ Ibid., p. 1168
51. Ibid., p. 469.
 52. Ibid., p. 468
 53. ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥
ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥ Ibid., p. 473..
 54. Ibid., p. 472
 55. Ibid., p. 471-72.
 56. Ibid., p. 471.
 57. Ibid., p. 468, see also p. 471.
 58. ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਲਗੈ ਕਪੜੈ ਜਾਮਾ ਹੋਇ ਪਲੀਤੁ ॥
ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਚੀਤੁ ॥ Ibid., p. 140
 59. Guru Arjan Dev enjoined that one who exploits the economically weaker section will get punishment in other world :
ਗਰੀਬਾ ਉਪਰਿ ਜਿ ਖਿੰਜੈ ਦਾੜੀ ॥
ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮਿ ਸਾ ਅਗਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਸਾੜੀ ॥ Ibid., p. 199
 60. ਥਾਨ ਮੁਕਾਮ ਜਲੇ ਬਿਜ ਮੰਦਰ ਮੁਛਿ ਮੁਛਿ ਕੁਇਰ ਭੁਲਾਇਆ ॥ Ibid., p. 417
 61. ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਝ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ ਜੋਗੀ ਮੰਗੈ ਦਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥ Ibid., p. 722
 62. ਰਤਨ ਵਿਗਾੜਿ ਵਿਗੋਏ ਕੁਤੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਕਾਈ ॥ Ibid., p. 360.
 63. ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕੁਰਲਾਣੇ ਤੋਂ ਕੀ ਦਰਦ ਨ ਆਇਆ ॥
ਜੇ ਸਕਤਾ ਸਕਤੇ ਕਉ ਮਾਰੇ ਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਰੋਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥ 4 ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਸਕਤਾ ਸੀਹੁ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੇ ਵਗੈ ਖਸਮੈ ਸਾ ਪੁਰਸਾਈ ॥ Ibid.
 64. Guru Gobind Singh also affirms the legitimization of the use of sword against injustice and tyrant ruler. In his letter *Zafarnāmah* (Persian) to Emperor Aurangzeb (1605) the Guru declared :
Chu kār az Hamah hīlate darguzasht halāl
ast burdan b-samshīr dast
(Meaning thereby that if all other devices fail, recourse to violence and war as the last resort for setting conflict is fair and just).
 65. Daljeet Singh, *Essays on the Authenticity Of Kartarpuri Bir And The Integrated Logic And Unity of Sikhism*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1987. p.97
 66. Ibid., p. 94-95
 67. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1245
 68. Daljeet Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 107
 69. Ibid., p. 102
 70. Ibid., p. 579
 71. Ritshel says that Christ never meant to divorce religion from politics but later interpreters of Christianity made it that way, unless religion and politics are combined one cannot act. See, *Edman's Handbook of The History of Christianity*.
 72. ਨਾਉ ਫਕੀਰੇ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੁ ਮੂਰਖ ਪੰਡਤੁ ਨਾਉ ॥

ਅੰਧੇ ਤਾ ਨਾਉ ਪਾਰਖੂ ਏਵੇ ਕਰੇ ਗੁਆਉ ॥
ਇਲਤਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ਚਉਧਰੀ ਕੂੜੀ ਪੂਰੇ ਥਾਉ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਕਲਿ ਕਾ ਏਹੁ ਨਿਆਉ ॥

Guru Granth Sahib, 1288

73. ਤ੍ਰਿਤੀਆ ਆਏ ਸੁਰਸਰੀ ਤਹ ਕਉਤਕੁ ਚਲਤੁ ਭਇਆ ॥
ਸਭ ਮੋਹੀ ਦੇਖਿ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਸੰਤ ਕਿਨੈ ਆਢੁ ਨ ਦਾਮੁ ਲਇਆ ॥
ਆਢੁ ਦਾਮੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਇਆ ਨ ਬੋਲਕ ਜਾਗਾਤੀਆ ਮੋਹਣ ਮੁੰਦਣਿ ਪਈ ॥
ਭਾਈ ਹਮ ਕਰਹ ਕਿਆ ਕਿਸੁ ਪਾਸਿ ਮਾਂਗਹ ਸਭ ਭਾਗਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪਿਛੇ ਪਈ ॥
ਜਾਗਾਤੀਆ ਉਪਾਵ ਸਿਆਣਪ ਕਰਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ਡਿਠਾ ਭੰਨਿ ਬੋਲਕਾ ਸਭਿ ਉਠਿ ਗਇਆ ॥

Ibid., pp. 1116-

1117

74. J.S. Grewal, 'The Rule of Law and Sikh Thought' in *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. XI, No. II, August 1984, p. 135.
75. *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, (Memories of Emperor Jahangir translated into English by Alexnder Rogers and Beveridge), Vol. I, Reprint Munshiram Manohar Lal, Delhi, 1968, pp. 72-73.
76. The conflict between the State and the Guru was not personal grievances or to establish a parallel state but it was a matter of principles, The contemporary Mughal rulers were autocrats and were exploiting people and violating human rights. The Guru protested against feudal atrocity and repression of the state.
77. For full details on the battles of the Guru see Madanjit Kaur's 'Amritsar Under Guru Arjan And Guru Hargobind' in *Journal of Sikh Studies* Vol. VI, No. II, August, 1978. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, pp. 74-77.
78. The Guru's venture to stake his life for the protection of *Tilak* and *Janju* is adequately established from Guru Gobind Singh's own assertion in '*Bachitra Natak*' - *Dasam Granth* (ed. Giani Mohinder Singh Ratan, Pub. Jawahar Singh Kirpal Singh, Amritsar 1967, Vol. I, p. 54). Guru Teg Bahadur's martyrdom was certainly one of the major cause for the disintegration of the Mughal hold in the Punjab, as the subsequent events and the activities of Guru Gobind Singh and his followers including the establishment of the Sikh rule under Banda Singh Bahadur and the Misal adequately prove.
79. ਯਾਹੀ ਕਾਜ ਧਰਾ ਹਮ ਜਨਮੇ ॥ ਸਮਝ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਾਧੂ ਸਭ ਮਨਮੇ ॥
ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਸੰਤ ਉਬਾਰਨ ॥ ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭਨ ਕੇ ਮੂਲ ਉਪਾਰਨਿ ॥
Dasam Granth, Vol. I, pp. 57-58
80. ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕੋਊ ਰਾਢਿਜੀ ਇਮਾਮ ਸ਼ਾਫੀ ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਬੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਚਾਨਬੋ ॥
ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰੀਮ ਸੋਈ ਰਾਜਿਕ ਰਹੀਮ ਉਈ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਨਾ ਭੇਦ ਕੋਈ ਭੂਲਿ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਮਾਨਬੋ ॥

ਏਕ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਏਕ; ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਬੈ ਏਕੈ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਾਨਬੇ॥ 85॥
 ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਮਸੀਤ ਸੋਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਐ ਨਿਵਾਜ਼ ਓਈ ਮਾਨਸ ਸਬੈ ਏਕ, ਪੈ ਅਨੇਕ ਕੋ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਉ ਹੈ॥
 ਏਕੈ ਨੈਨ ਏਕੈ ਕਾਨ, ਏਕੈ ਦੇਹ ਏਕੈ ਬਾਨ; ਖਾਕ ਬਾਦ ਆਤਿਸ਼ ਐ ਆਬ ਕੋ ਰਲਾਉ ਹੈ॥
 ਅੱਲਹ ਅਭੇਖ ਸੋਈ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਅਉ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਓਈ; ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਬੈ ਏਕ ਹੀ ਬਨਾਉ ਹੈ॥ 86॥

Dasam Granth, Vol. I, p. 19

81. This noble and comprehensive ideal of equality and collective responsibility was lost in the rapid process of building independent kingdoms by the Sikh Sardars. The Sikh resurgents of the late nineteenth century had to discover their inheritance all afresh. See J.S. Grewal '*Rule Of Law And Sikh Thought*', *Op. Cit.*, p.139

RAJ KAREGA KHALSA

S. S. DHANOA, I.A.S. (RETD.)

*Satgur(u) Nanak pargatyā mitī dhund jag chānan hoā
jiun kar sūraj nikilyā tāre chhape andher paloā,
singh buke mirgāvli bhani jā na dhīr dhroā,
jithai bābā pair dharai pūjā āsan thāpan soā
sidh āsan sabh jagat de Nanak ād mate je koā,
ghar ghar andar dharmsāl hovai kīrtan sadā vasoā
Bābe tāre chār chak nau khand pirthmī sachā dhoā,
gurmukh kal vich pargat hoā*

The birthday of Guru Nanak is celebrated every year among others with the singing of the above verse of Bhai Gurdas. His verses in sanctity, are considered to be next only to *Gurbāṇī* in the *Sri Guru Granth Saheb* and it is believed that Guru Arjan Dev blessed the writing of Bhai Gurdas as the key to the understanding of the *Sri Guru Granth Saheb*. What Bhai Gurdas says about Guru Nanak in his writings has to be accepted as something describing the reality perceived by him rather than a mere outpourings of the heart of a devotee. The epitome of the mission of Guru Nanak was the baptism by Guru Gobind Singh of the five beloved ones and converting the Sikh *sangats* into *Khalsa*. The Guru after about 240 years merged his being in *Khalsa*. The first test of fire and blood in the physical absence of the *Guru* made them declare, that it was the order of the Timeless Being that the *Guru* for the *Khalsa* was the *Granth*. The *Granth* was the manifest physical body of the *Guru* and anyone with purity of heart can communicate with Him through the word of *Shabad*, then the *Khalsa* declared the blessing of the *Guru* that henceforth, the *Khalsa* shall prevail. This is a verse that is still sung in every congregation of the Sikhs.

2. Scholars have tried to explain the import of the revolution that was brought about by Guru Nanak. The greatness of Guru

Nanak as described by his successor *Gurus* and *Bhats* in the *Sri Guru Granth Saheb* is there for all of us to read and imbibe but it is significant that none of the *gurus* wrote his autobiography or a biography of his *guru* who merged his being in him. The only contemporary material that we have to enable us to understand the impact that the *gurus* made on men and events around them, are a few verses in the *Guru Granth Saheb*, some writings of Bhai Gurdas and some portions of *Dasam Granth*. We also have accounts of Mohsin Fani, Sujan Rai Bhandari, Sainapati, Kesar Singh Chhiber and references here and there in the Mughal court records. I must congratulate scholars of the Panjabi University who have endeavoured to preserve and compile all the available writings and records connected with the Sikh *Gurus* and Sikh history.

3. The event that shook India when Guru Gobind Singh was no more, was the uprising of the *Khalsa* and the sack of Sirhind in 1710 A.D. We have some description of the *Khalsa* valour in a recently discovered contemporary manuscript called *Israri-Samadi*, written in praise of Abdul Samad Khan, the then Governor of Panjab who had been assigned the task of restoring order after suppressing the Sikh uprising. The next most important writing, again coming from the pen of a writer retained by the enemy is of Qazi Nur Mohammad. It is worth quoting :-

"Do not call the dogs (the Sikhs) 'dogs', because they are lions, and are courageous like lions in the field of battle. How can a hero, who roars like a lion in the field of battle, be called a dog? If you wish to learn the art of war, come face to face with them in the field. They will demonstrate it to you in such a way that one and all will praise them for it. If you wish to learn the science of war, O swordman, learn and to get safely out of an action. *Singh* is a title (a form of address for them). It is not justice to call them dogs. If you do not know the Hindustani language (I tell you that), the word *Singh* means a Lion. Truly they are lions in battle, and at the time of peace they surpass Hatim."

"You may yourself judge, O brave man, how a single battalion of theirs rushed upon Multan, entered the city and devastated it and carried away an immense booty. I am not

sufficiently strong in mind to be able to express what the dogs did there. Since the creation of world nobody remembers to have seen Multan devastated in this way at the hands of anybody. But because God so willed it, every one of us has to submit to His will."

"Leaving aside their mode of fighting hear you another point in which they excel all other fighting people. In no case would they slay a coward, nor would they put an obstacle in the way of fugitive. They do not plunder the wealth and ornaments of a woman, be she a well-to-do lady or a maid-servant. There is no adultery amongst these dogs, nor are these mischievous people given to thieving. Whether a woman is young or old, they call her a *buddhiya*, and ask her to get out of the way. The word *buddhiya* in the Indian language means 'an old lady'. There is no thief at all amongst these dogs, nor is there any house-breaker born amongst these miscreants. They do not make friends with adulterers and house-breakers, though their behaviour on the whole is not commendable."

"If you are not conversant with their religion, I tell you that the *Sikhs* are disciples of the *Guru* and that, that august *Guru* lived at *Chak* (Amritsar). The ways and manners of these people received their impetus from Nanak who shewed these *Sikhs* a separate path (taught them a distinct religion). He was succeeded by Govind Singh. From him they received the title of *Singh*. They are not from amongst the Hindus. These miscreants have a separate religion of their own."

4. We have observations on the *Sikhs* by George Forster in a letter written in 1785 :

" In the defence and recovery of their country, the *Sicques* (*Sikhs*) displayed a courage of the most obstinate kind and manifested a perserverence, under the pressure of calamities, when the common danger roused them to action, and gave but one impulse to their spirit. Should any future cause call forth the combined efforts of the *Sicques* (*Sikhs*) to maintain the existence of empire and religion, we may see some ambitious chief led on by his genius and success, and absorbing the power of his associates, display, from the ruins of their commonwealth, the standard of monarchy. The pages of history are filled with like effects, springing from like causes. Under such a form of Government, I have little hesitation in

saying that the Sicques (Sikhs) would be soon advanced to the first rank among the native princes of Hindostan; and would become a terror to the surrounding States."

"From the observations which I have made of the Seicks (Sikhs) they would appear to be a haughty and a high spirited people. Once I travelled in the company of a *Seick* (Sikh) horseman for some days and though I made to him several tenders of my acquaintance, he treated them all with great reserve, and a covert sort of disdain. There was no reason to be particularly offended in his hauteur towards me, for he regarded every other person in the same manner. His answer, when I asked him very respectfully in whose service he was retained, seemed strikingly charactersitic of what I conceive to be the disposition of the nation. He said, in a tone of voice and with a countenance which glowed with and was keenly animated by the warm spirit of liberty and independence, that he disclaimed an earthly master, and that he was the servant only of his prophet."

5. *Panth Parkash* of Ratan Singh Bhangu is an account of the *Khalsa* written after the British had established themselves as the power challenging the *Khalsa* and J.D. Cunningham wrote the 'History of the Sikhs' at the time when the *Khalsa* went under before the British. Yet his observations and understanding of the *Khalsa* are perceptive :

"The last apostle of the Sikhs did not live to see his own ends accomplished, but he effectually roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people, and filled them with a lofty although fitful longing for social freedom and national ascendancy, the proper adjuncts of that purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak. Gobind saw what was yet vital, and he relumed it with Promethean fire. A living spirit possesses the whole Sikh people, and the impress of Gobind has not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds, but has operated materially and given amplitude to their physical frames. The features and external form of a whole people have been modified, and a Sikh chief is not more distinguishable by his stately person and free and manly bearing, than a minister of his faith is by a lofty thoughtfulness of look, which marks the fervour of his soul and his persuasion of the near presence of the Divinity."

6. Shah Mohammad was a Muslim who saw the *Khalsa* army being defeated. The tears he has shed over this defeat makes one cry even now but the confidence he has in the valour and the ultimate victory of the *Khalsa* comes out in words like that "ultimately what will prevail is that as will be dictated by *Khalsa Panth*".

7. The foregoing brings out clearly that what Guru Nanak brought about was a revolution and in at least North India the *Khalsa* was the acknowledged leader who called the shots and whose values prevailed in the society. My concern in this lecture is to seek your support and guidance in my humble effort to identify some of the elements that made the *Khalsa* great and in understanding what got lost and when, so as to bring the *Khalsa* to a pass, where it has been on the receiving end from all quarters for quite sometime now.

8. "Dikheá aakhī bujháiyá sifti sachī sameo,
Tin kau kyá updesīai jin(i) Guru Nanak Deo".

-Guru Granth Sahib, p.150

This couplet of Guru Angad is said to be his response to a query of his associates who had earlier been co-disciples with him of Guru Nanak. The couplet provides us one clue to the phenomena that overtook the *Khalsa* in the nineteenth century. The Sikhs who had been initiated by the 10th Guru Nanak personally or the contemporary *Panj Piaras* were no longer there by the end of the 18th century. The world view of the *Khalsa* acquired from Guru Gobind Singh and his contemporaries was no longer available to the *Khalsa* of the 19th century and in the meanwhile the world around had changed. The *Khalsa* from being persecuted had come to prevail and dominate the north west of India and the British power was face to face with them. The elan of the 18th century continued to pulsate among the *Khalsa* that could still impress deeply writers and observers like Cunningham and to some extent that elan makes for the triumph of the Sikhs at the individual level even these days but it did not enable the *Khalsa* to meet the new challenges at the ideological level and the defeat of the *Khalsa* armies at the hands of the British marked the end of the phase of the *Khalsa* dominance in India. The treachery

of the newly converted Sikh generals and others alone cannot explain the decline of the *Khalsa* with the advent of the British both in numbers and in spirit.

9. It would be worthwhile here to have a look at some of the elements that had made the *Khalsa* what an observer like Cunningham saw in them, even when the *Khalsa* had entered in the phase of decline. We subscribe these days to what we call a rational empirical materialistic view about man and the world in which he lives. However, the *Gurus'* perception of man and his world though rational and comprehensive is different and one can make bold to say that it is more authentic, valid and dependable than the materialistic world view that is based on observable data or facts because the *Gurus'* view comes out of a reality that sustains and underlies our day to day world of appearances. In order to have some understanding of what is being resented we have to move from what is known and understood to the area that was once known but got discarded as the observable facts and phenomena could not lend itself to a religious interpretation. Yet all men/women could not live without religion so religion became an instrumentality for personal piety and emotional relief and stability.

10. The empirical knowledge that we have about human beings is that man/woman is born out of asexual or a sexual union of man and woman like many other living organisms. The physical body of every living organism survives, develops and procreates during the life span of the organism within an overall system in our biosphere. Mind as a consciousness and response organ is present even in the simplest organism like amoeba. Mind is an abstract noun, a collective name that we give to the operations of a living substance when it displays consciousness and responds to the environment on the basis of that consciousness.

11. Guru Nanak while endorsing the above view that physically man/woman's body is a product of union between his mother and father and consists of elements similar to other living beings, further says that human birth takes place under specific direction of the Almighty when He places the spark of His light in man/woman. "*Ae sarirā meryā Har(i) tum meh jot(i) dhari tār*

tūn jag meh äyā". SGGGS Page 921. He emphasises that union of father and mother was a mere excuse or accident, the real father and mother of man is God alone. The Semitic religions hold the view that man/woman was created by God who breathed His spirit in him or created him in His own image.

12. Consciousness or mind developes and grows in living organisms during their interaction with environment. *Gurbānī* recognises that mind developes from the physical elements that sustain an organism. We know that human body constantly imbibes elements from the physical world and after converting those into energy, muscle and bones etc. ex-creates the waste in the biosphere and with physical death the whole body merges into physical elements again.

*"putrī terī bidh kar thātī
jaan sat kar hoegī māṭī,"*

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 374

However, about mind there are two propositions made in *Gurbānī* which are in my view unique. Firstly it is said that like biosphere, there is a sphere of consciousness shared by all living beings.

*"ekā surt(i) jete hain jāā,
surt(i) vihinā koe na kīā,"*

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 24

A scientist of ICRISAT Dr. Rupert Sheldrake in his book considered somewhat controversial called, "*A New Science of Life*," has hinted at such a possibility on the basis of empirical observation of behaviour of living organisms physically separated from each other by long distances. The second observation is that mind in man/woman does not die with the death of the physical body. We do not know what really happens to it but it is clear in *Gurbānī* that human mind is in some communion with the Almighty before human birth and after human death.

*"is man kī koi jānai bheo,
eh man līn bhae sukhdeo,"*

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 30

"tan ehu manūā man ehu sáchá,"

-Guru Granth Sahib, p.686

This assertion that the source of human mind is divine is also made by Guru Nanak in *Sidh Gosht*.

13. I am unable to grasp the meaning and import of the word '*shabad*' in *Gurbāṇī*. Sometime back this University organised a seminar on the subject and there have been other seminars too but the full import of the word continues to elude me. A commonsense understanding can be that '*shabad*' is a product of human mind born out of his unique faculty of language which is a socio-cultural product of human society. '*Shabad*' in '*Gurbāṇī*' it seems is not confined to this common sense meaning. Firstly, we can say that '*Gurbāṇī*' in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is '*Shabad*' and to that extent we can have some understanding of the term but beyond that '*Shabad*' is something primordial and almost synonymous with God or the Eternal *Guru*. In *Rāmkali Sad* it is clearly stated that in physical death the *Guru* has merged himself in '*Shabad*'

*"gurmukh marai na janmai gurmukh,
gurmukh shabad samāhā he."*

-*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1054-55

and

"gur meh aap smoe shabad vartāiyā,"

-*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1279

The task of a human being in this world according to Guru Nanak is to get the '*shabad*' embedded in his consciousness. Anything embedded in consciousness guides human behaviour at the instinct level. It is perhaps for this reason that '*Gurbāṇī*' is written to music and Sikhs are enjoined to sing and listen to *kirtan* of '*Gurbāṇī*' in congregations.

14. It seems to be the design of the Almighty that human beings have to survive and surmount an environment that constantly goes on changing. Among all the creatures, human beings have the capacity to manipulate and change the environment in their favour. The special position of humans in nature is recognised by all religions and '*Gurbāṇī*' recognises that in this world man has supremacy over other creatures. It is, therefore, natural that Creator should have made provision to guide man to recognise His order and design in the ever changing Universe. This guidance

has been there from what I call the eternal *Guru* through the medium of *Shabad*. When the world witnessed the fastest and maximum change from sixteenth Century A.D. onwards, we had a revolution and on the spiritual side the most comprehensive and long lasting was the advent of Guru Nanak and his ten successor Gurus spread over almost 240 years.

15. Guru Nanak was emphatic that ones' whole life has to be guided by '*Shabad*' and salvation which meant a merging with '*Shabad*' or the Divine Order was to be achieved while living as a householder as a social being and that salvation was possible in '*Sangat*' i.e., company of other fellow-travellers. It was, therefore, necessary for Guru Nanak to convey an idea about the world and its ways under the divine order. Some scholars have maintained that unlike Shankara's view, Guru Nanak has clearly held that the world of human beings was true and real and it was not an illusion. This goes counter to the constant refrain in '*Gurbāñī*' that nothing of this world is lasting and nothing was of any avail in the hereafter. If the Supreme Being in the *Mūl Mantra* is a True and Timeless Being, how can elements that change and perish so fast can also be true?

"dristmān hai sagal mithena" :

-*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1085

and

"nanaku kahatu jagatu sabhu mithyā jion supnā raināi"

-*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1231

It seems clear from '*Gurbāñī*' that the world of appearance which is everchanging is created by God for a purpose. The one Lord of the world Himself created what appears to be something other than Him and if behind the appearances one can see Him, the appearance is an illusion for one but if one gets ensnared in the illusion, he gets lost till *Akal Purakh* or *Satguru* in His grace rids him of his *haumai* and manifests His Self or Reality to him. Sankara's simile of snake and rope perhaps can be understood in that sense.

*"ohu ju bharamu bhulāvāu kahīat
tin meh urjhio sagal sansārā."*

nindou nahī kahu batāi
ehu khasam kā kīā". SGGS p. 897
"ráh dowai khasamu eko jānu".

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 223

The purpose of the creation as one can make out from *Gurbāñī* is that *Akal Purakh* has made it as an abode of righteousness wherein He projects the glory and greatness of His saints or *Gurmukhs*.

"hukmai dhartī sājīān sachī dharamsálā".

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 785

"dhart(i) upāi dharī dharamsálā".

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1033

Gurbāñī calls it the wrestling arena of the True one. A true Sikh sees himself in this arena as a wrestler of the *Akāl Purakh* whom *Guru* has made prominent among others and with the blessing of his *Guru*, he overcomes the five human infirmities. He returns home (to God) gainfully from the arena unlike the self-centred one's who returns after losing even what they had.

16. The *Akāl Purakh* in this design has created the means to ensnare man and this is often referred to in *Gurbāñī* as *Maya*.

"māyā mamtā kartai lāi.
ehu hukamu kari sarisht (i) upāi ".

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1261

The nature of *Māyā* in *Gurbāñī* is almost similar to the nature of Satan in Semitic religions. Like Satan, *Māyā* tempts human beings.

"antari sahsā bāhari máyā nainī lāgas bāñī".

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 877

and

"pawan jhulāre máyā de,
hari de bhagat sadā thiru se".

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1033

The most important and so far unidentified shortcoming of human beings that *Guru Nanak* has brought out is what *Gurbāñī* calls *haumai*. This concept of *Gurbāñī* has not received the attention it deserves from scholars. Our knowledge of development of the human personality tells us that from initial

concerns about ones own needs, a human being progresses and incorporates in his personality a concern for others in his cultural group and those who have the best integrated personality, become truly altruistic with concern for the entire human race. It is this development of personality or self in human beings that has been called *haumai* by Guru Nanak. No one can grow up in human society without *haumai*. This is a special infirmity that human beings are born with :

"haumai rogou manukh kou dinä".

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1140

It is the coloured glass that a man/woman wears through which he perceives the entire reality inside him and outside :

*"ehu manu ärsi koï gurmukhï vekhai,
morchä na lägai jä haumai sokhai."*

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 115

17. Guru Nanak's religion is about transcending this infirmity. John Hick in 'God and Universe of Faiths' describes that purpose of religion is to transform the self-centredness in man to Reality or God-centredness which in *Gurbäni* idiom can be called transformation from *manmukh* to *gurmukh*. '*Haumai* as an infirmity in human beings is something like what the Christians call 'original sin'.

*"jini rachi rachiä purukhi
bidhätai näle haumai päi:."*

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 999

*"haumai ehä jäti hai haumai karam kamäe,
haumai eï bandhnä fir fir jonï päe,
haumai kithon upjai kitu sanjamjä ehe jäe,
haumai eho hukami hai paiyai kirit firäi,
haumai diragh rogu hai dāru bhī isu māhe,
kirpā kare je āpnī tan gur(u) ká shabad kamāe,
Nanak kahai sunaho janohu iti sanjami dukh jāi".*

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 466

Maya and *haumai* have a symbiotic relationship in self-centred individuals. It is understandable, therefore, that in the scale of values of *Gurbäni* humility comes on top so much so that evil is not to be seen in others but only if at all, it is to be

recognised in one's own self. Guru Nanak himself would associate with lowliest of the low.

18. God-centred ones or *gurmukhs* have to live in the world as a lotus flower lives in water and he has to go across the biosphere with *Shabad* embedded in his consciousness. Whatever comes his way in his truthful living, is sanctified, be it wealth, riches or property. *Gurbāṇī* holds assurance to all those who turn Godwards that the Lord who preserved them in mother's womb, will equally preserve them in the vicissitudes of existence.

*"prītpāl mātā udar rakhai lagan det na sek,
soi suāmi ehā rakhai bujh budh bibek."*

-*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1007.

Gurbāṇī says about *Māyā* that it is a servant of God-centred ones but those who run after it do not get it.

*"kahu Nanak jah tyāg dei,
tab oh charni āe paī,
jo māngai so bhukhā rahai "*

-*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 892

19. It is the truthful living of a *gurmukh* as a willing instrument of the Guru/God that brings His grace on him with awakening of *Naam* or essence of God in him. *Naam* in *Gurbāṇī* is that aspect of God which sustains His creation and manifests His presence in the hearts of His devotees. Guru Nanak has compared *Naam* to the pointer stick of a blindman. The simile used indicates that God's design in the world is unknowable and man in the midst of storm of pulls and pressures of *māyā* and *haumai* gets driven to wherever the blowing wind takes him except that those with *Naam* can feel their way around and save themselves.

"jiun andhulai hathi tohñī harināmu hamārai."

-*Guru Granth Sahib*, p.422

The awakening of God in a *gurmukh* through the grace of the *Guru* is the objective for which one gets born as a human being. *Naam* is the treasure that the *Guru* holds for human beings and for the *Kali* age the religion is *Naam*.

*"balio chirāgu andhiār meh
sabh kali udhri ik naam dharam,
pragatu sagal hari bhavan meh*

janu Nanaku guru pārbrahmu".

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1387

and

*"guptā naamu vartai vichi kalijugi
ghati ghati hari bharpūri rehyā,
naamu ratanu tinā hirdai pragateyā
jo gur sarnāi bhaji paeya".*

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1334

It only means that in the fast changing world the correct world view is possible through internalising the *Gurus'* word which with *Gurus'* grace makes the indwelling God's presence manifest to a *gurmukh* and in that situation alone his perception and judgement will be unerring.

20. Whatever is latent in *Gurbāṇī* was made patent in the lives of the *Gurus*. *Janamsākhīs* and *Gur Bilās* accounts are not very dependable but we could have an idea of the world view of the *Gurus* from some well known events that find mention in *Gurbāṇī*. The most cataclysmic event was Babur's attack on India. Pathans had proved themselves to be unworthy to rule the gem that was India and Babur's army had cut the Pathan princes to pieces. The wealth and beauty of women which had become source of their enjoyment became their enemies in the eyes of Babur's soldiery. Yet Guru Nanak says that all that has happened, the plunder, pillage and holocaust at Emnabad was as ordained by God who had to punish those who forgot His Name and engaged themselves in luxury, amassing of wealth through sin and sensual enjoyment. When God decides to punish someone, he deprives him of goodness. God Almighty did not take blame on Himself for inflicting such severe retribution but sent Mughals as His *yama*. The Mughals used guns and the Pathans elephants in the battle but he whom the Lord had ordained got defeated. This would not have happened if the people had listened and changed their ways. He marvels as to how God Almighty has brought about the fall of the erstwhile mighty and the great and even in this great human tragedy, he sees nothing but God's design. He does say that the suffering of Indians was so great that it would have touched His heart and if two strong people fight and cut of

them one gets killed, one has no regret but if a strong lion falls on innocent sheep, one holds the shepherd accountable i.e., the Pathans. The incantations and charms of holymen engaged by Pathans were of no avail against Babur. Guru Nanak also asserts that what has happened and shall take place under the Divine dispensation is true justice. Guru Nanak says that what he had said about Babur was truth and this was the time to speak the truth.

21. *Shri Guru Granth Sahib* recounts a number of events where God Almighty has worked miracles to save His devotees like Prahlad, Kabir and Namdev. Guru Arjan Dev recounts how for no reason Sulhi Khan set about to harm him but due to God Almighty's mercy on him Sulhi Khan died a dishonourable death and no harm came to him. He makes the observation that those who oppress the poor, they invite wrath of God on themselves.

22. Bhai Gurdas in his writings has alluded to the death of Guru Arjan Dev as an event of great consequence. He has described the change that came about in the style of living of the Guru with Guru Hargobind and the misunderstanding that the new ways of the Guru caused among the Sikhs and after describing the changed ways of the Guru, Bhai Gurdas asserts that the true Sikhs find him to be the same *Guru*.

23. When we come to *Dasam Granth*, we find that there are different perceptions about its various contents. The fact that those contents were considered to be worth pereserving and compiling in one folio by the 1st generation Sikhs soon after Guru Gobind Singh cannot be lightly overlooked merely because some of us cannot integrate some portions of the *Dasam Granth* with the over view that we have about the teaching and personality of the *Guru*. I think that we can take the chronical of contemporary events described in *Bachittar Natak* and *Zafarnamah* as authentic for our purpose and I would urge scholars of this University to have another close look at *Dasam Granth* as I find that '*Triya Charitar*' has been left out in the '*Shabadarth*' published by the University perhaps because it has been concluded that it is not written by Guru Gobind Singh. Yet we find that '*kabio bāch chaupai*' a verse for daily recitation for the *Khalsa* comes at the

end of a '*Triyá Charitar*'.

24. Guru Gobind Singh in '*Bachittar Natak*' in describing his predecessor *Gurus*, makes a mention of Guru Arjun as the 5th Guru and merely writes that when he, Guru Arjun departed he put Hargobind in his place. There is no reference to the torture he went through on the basis of false complaints. He, however, clearly asserts that what the ninth Guru did was a unique feat of the age undertaken for upholding *Dharma* for the sake of sacred thread and *tilak* (of the Hindus). He did not show any miracle as it amounted to showman's tricks which men of God considered as something derogatory. He got himself beheaded but did not give his secret. He went to the abode of God after breaking the potsherd of his body at the door of the Delhi emperor. No one had done a deed like that before. There is not a word of blame or anger against the Mugahals in *Bachittar Natak* nor one comes across any injunction for the Sikhs to revolt against the state rather when Muazzam prayed for help in the war of succession, Guru Gobind Singh readily provided a contingent from among his Sikhs and he accepted to receive robes of honour from the emperor Bahadur Shah after his victory in the battle of Jajau.

25. Guru Gobind Singh gives the cause of battle of Bhangani his first battle, as the unprovoked armed attack on him by Raja Fateh Shah of Srinagar. He describes the battle in detail. He mentions that Hari Chand was a brave warrior on the other side who shot three arrows onto him, one hit his horse, the second, almost touched his ear and the third pierced his belt scratching his skin and then he felt incensed and killed Hari Chand with one shot of arrow. He concludes the description that with the Grace of God, he was victorious. Guru Gobind Singh mentions that when Alif Khan came to Nadaun, he went there to assist *raja* Bhim Chand on his request and after a skirmish, the hill chiefs made peace with Alif Khan and Guru Gobind Singh returned home. Guru Gobind Singh then briefly describes the attacks of Dilawar Khan (Khanzada) and Hussaini on Anandpur. The first attack was planned as a surprise attack but the attackers got spotted by the vigilant Sikhs and Khanzada realising that the element of surprise was no longer there withdrew. Guru Gobind Singh concludes by

saying '*Prabh (u) bal hamai na chhue sakai bhajat bhae nidán*'. Hussaini actually got involved in battles with other hill chiefs and had to return before he could reach Anandpur and the chapter concludes with the observation :

*"rákh liye ham ko jagrái,
loh ghatá an te barsái".*

The last event described is the despatch of Prince Muazzam against the hill chiefs and Guru Gobind Singh. People in the area got scared and many took shelter further up in the hills and they tried to frighten Guru Gobind Singh too but he said it had no effect on him as no one can predict what was in the womb of future (*Kál Karam Ko maram na páyo*). However, the wrath of Mughals fell on the detractors of the Guru and on that Guru Gobind Singh made the observation that the house of Babar and the House of Baba Nanak owe their foundation to God. Recognise *Babe ke* the True Lord of spirit and consider *Babar Ke* as the worldly power. If someone did not pay what he owed to the house of Nanak, the house of Babar would catch him and extract that due from him. The royal Princes' expedition too returned without harming Guru Gobind Singh and he wrote :

*"santan kasht na dekhan páyo
áp háth dai náth bacháyo".*

One can notice that perception of Guru Gobind Singh about these events is the same as of Guru Arjan when he has informed about the impending attack by Sulhi Khan.

26. Guru Gobind Singh decided to address a letter to Aurangzeb when in the worldly-sense he was down and out. He had lost his mother, his four sons, innumerable Sikhs and Anandpur so fondly developed by him. Yet he saw himself as the victor. It was Aurangzeb who had gone back on his oath taken on the holy *Koran*. He says clearly to Aurangzeb that his pretention of religious piety was a sham. As against that the same God in whose name Aurangzeb had taken the false oath, had protected Guru Gobind Singh as he believed in Him. He advises Aurangzeb that he should not oppress the poor and the meek and he should remember that the sword of God could fall on him too. In this letter he makes the famous statement that "when all possible

alternatives are exhausted, it is but lawful to resort to sword". The loss of sons or worldly possessions was no loss but the real loss was the loss of word by Aurangzeb. The victory of Guru Gobind Singh got recognised by Aurangzeb when all action against him was ordered to cease and a gurbardar was asked to escort Guru Gobind Singh to Deccan to meet Aurangzeb. It can be said that responses of the *Gurus* emanated from their world view and moral imperative and from every encounter with the state the house of Guru Nanak emerged stronger. Slowly the Sikhs became a state within state. The so called victory of Aurangzeb against Guru Gobind Singh had been won on the basis of trickery. Guru Gobind Singh makes it clear that he could have no trust in his oath but he had trust in God and the same God for whom he took false oath did not permit even one hair of his body to be harmed. The moral seems to be that a God centred person should not mind being cheated but he cannot resort to similar trickery.

27. From *Gur Sobha* we learn that the new code prescribed for the *Khalsa* caused quite a consternation and upheaval among the Sikhs. *Hukumnamahs* of Guru Gobind Singh tell us that he had done away with the system of *Masands* before hand. It was possible earlier for the Sikhs who followed the *Varna Asharam Dharma* and other Hindu or Muslim ways to be counted as Sikhs but with the new code the line got drawn quite clearly. There was a strike among shopkeepers of Delhi as many were not ready to accept the new code. Ultimately, the new code of the *Khalsa* became the accepted code. It appears that the *Guru* considered it to be a necessary step in preparation for the *Guru's* being getting merged in the *Khalsa*.

28. That the *Khalsa* perception of reality was not easy comes out clearly from *Bansāvalīnāmā* of Kesar Singh Chhiber. His distrust of the Muslims in general is not in accordance with the values of *Gurbānī* as also his feeling and respect for *Brahmins* although Chhiber came from a family that had association with the *Gurus* over generations.

29. The advent of Banda Bahadur made this divergence in perception even more pronounced. The *Khalsa* joined him in the

sack of Sirhind in line with the Sikh tradition to mete out punishment to those who committed wanton excesses against the *Guru*. It was done by the followers of the second *Guru* when the villagers of Khadur forced him to leave the village on the instigation of a jealous village ascetic who had declared that the drought in the village was caused by the act of the villagers in accepting a householder as their *Guru*. It was again repeated when the Sikhs subjected Chandu Shah to severe retribution for his role in the torture and death of Guru Arjan. The *Khalsa*, however, kept their identity separate and they were able to preserve the catholicity of their faith when Banda Bahadur tried to introduce innovations like "*Fateh Darshan*". There are many aspects of life and deeds of Banda Bahadur which are at variance with the values projected by the *Gurus* which forces one to think that the entire Banda phenomenon in Sikh history requires a reassessment and re-evaluation.

30. Kesar Singh Chhiber was of the view tht the Sikh/Singh values were projected in the *Khalsa* till the time of Nawab Kapur Singh i.e., till 1746-47 A.D. Thereafter according to him came the age of *maeki* Sikhs. There is an element of truth in what he said as thereafter, we have the period of dominance of Sikh Misls where we find that fruits of valour of the *Khalsa* got appropriated by Misaldars and the gains of *Khalsa* victories passed on to them as wealth and territory which got inherited by their descendants as personal property. We have the spectacle of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the last recognised Jathedar of the *Khalsa*.

31. The first generation *Khalsa* amply displayed the values that the *Gurus* inculcated in them. They excelled each other in service and till Nawab Kapur Singh, no one was projected as a leader and we know that Kapur Singh, was ordered by the *Khalsa* to accept the robe of honour sent by the Governor of Lahore. He had agreed to accept it only when he was assured by the *Khalsa* that he would be permitted to serve his fellow Singhs as earlier. This also comes out from the description of the Sikh way of life by Ratan Singh Bhangu in '*Panth Parkash*'. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia had succeeded Nawab Kapur Singh and he was the last leader of the *Khalsa* from whom the Sikhs in general and the Sikh chiefs

could accept baptism of 'Amrit'. Thereafter, although all the Chiefs paid obeisance to 'Khalsa jio' but it became more or less a totem. Maharaja Ranjit Singh called himself *Singh Saheb* among the *Khalsa* but did he qualify as a Singh to be so addressed? The *Khalsa* recognised Akali Phoola Singh to be more a *Singh Saheb* than Ranjit Singh which was the reason for Maharaja Patiala failing to proceed against him for his unprovoked attack against a group of British survey party and for Maharaja Ranjit Singh to accept public flogging at *Akal Takht* for his un-Sikh like personal conduct in having a Muslim concubine. Since *Nihang Sikhs* had come to disdain personal retention of wealth or territory, they could not provide a revival of the pristine *Khalsa*.

32. The British period saw many vicissitudes of the *Khalsa*. They were admired for their subordinate patriotism to British on one hand and on the other hand there was resistance to the British, sometime armed and sometime non-violent from *Namdharis*, *Babbar Akalis* and *Shromani Akali Dal* etc. We can say that the agitation for *Gurdwara* reform did give cause for hope for the *Khalsa* revival but the later subordination of the movement to political exigencies frustrated if not entirely extinguished the flame that got lighted in the *Gurdwara* reform movement.

33. All the movements that sought to rekindle the *Khalsa* spirit are characterised by missing the wood for the trees or as *Gurbāṇī* says :

"*Varmi māri saap na marei
nāmu na suneī dorā*". SGGS p. 381

or

"*Bhekhī Agn(i) na bujheī chintā hai man māhe,
varmi māri sāpu na marai tiun nigure karam kamāe*".

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 588

The *Nirankari* movement questioned the Sikh social practices of the mid 19th century and sought to reform the Sikh society in the light of *Gurbāṇī*. With the *Namdharis* the objective was to revive and restore the Sikh ascendancy of the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The permission to slaughter cows in Punjab by the British was an anathema to the *Kukas*. The *Singh Sabha* mainly took up the social and spiritual aspects for

the revival of the Sikh society. They effectively took up the challenge to the Sikh identity and the *Akali* concern mainly became political power on the basis of the Sikh identity. It seems that placed as the Sikhs are i.e., being concentrated in Panjab constituting 60 percent of its population, the political power in a democratic polity purely on the basis of Sikh identity would continue to elude them.

34. We have these days efforts being made to bring about a unity among various *Akali* factions. I came across an article on the subject in which *Jathedar* of the *Akal Takht* had quoted from *Gurbāṇī* a few verses of the following *Shabad*.

Raag Āsā ghar dījā mahalā chauthā :

*"kis hi dharā kiā mitar sut nāli bhāi,
kis hi dharā kiā kuram sake nāl jawāi,
kis hi dharā kiā sīkdār chaudhrī nāli apnai swāi,
hamārā dharā harī rahea smāi,
ham hari suin dharā kiā meri hari tek,
main hari bin pakhu dharā avaru na koī haun hari gun*

gāvān

*asankh anek (rahau),
Jin siun dhare kareh se jāhe,
Jhūth dhare kari pachhotāhe,
thiri na raheh man khoti kamāeh,
ham hari siun dharā kiā jis kā koī samrathu nāhe.
eh sabi dhare māyā moh pasāri,
māyā ko lūjhe gavāri,
Janami mareh jue bājī hāri,
hamrai hari dharā ji haltu paltu sabhu swāri,
kalijug meh dhare panch chor jhagrāe,
kām, krodh, lobh, moh, abhimān vadhāe,
jis no kirpā kare tisu satsang milāe,
hamrā har(i) dharā jini eh dhare sabhi gavāe,
mithyā dījā bhāu dhare beh pāvai,
prāyā chhidar atkalai apnā ahankār vadhāvai,
jaisā bijai taisā khāvai, jan Nanak kā har (i) dharā
dharamu
sabh srisht (i) jini āvai".*

-Guru Granth Sahib, p. 366

The *Shabad* if read carefully would rule out any group or

party that has furthering of any particular or sectional worldly interests of a group or a community. I do not mean to suggest that the *Khalsa* cannot form a political party in the light of *Gurbāṇī*. It surely can as political activity in a democracy is a part of life but its agenda has to emanate from *Gurbāṇī*. Guru Nanak has suggested one by saying that he would stand with the downtrodden and the society that takes care of the meek and the poor is blessed by God and in the words of Kabir only he is brave who fights for the poor. The third item that suggests itself is a fight for justice for all men/women in all walks of life. The fourth emerges out of the recognised equality among all men/women of the world without any distinction of caste, creed, birth, nationality, colour or sex. The fifth can be the insistence on transparency in public policies and public life in line with what Guru Gobind Singh wrote to Aurangzeb in *Zafarnámāh*. With the above agenda the *Akālī Dal* can go for active participation in civic affairs and whatever their numerical strength, people are bound to follow them.